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CONTENTS  
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# CONTENTS

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## 1. THE SITUATION IN JAPAN AND THE TASKS OF THE JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTY

*This article gives much required information on the actual economic situation in Japan, both in industry and agriculture and the war. The condition of the Japanese workers and peasants, and, most important, the growing strike wave and the unrest among the peasantry and the troops, are described in detail. Finally, the character of the Japanese revolution is defined. (See page 215)*

## 2. BRITAIN'S TRANSITION TO PROTECTION AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE SITUATION

*E. Burns. A statistical review of Britain's economic and financial position, the reason for the fall of the pound and the passing to a policy of Protection as an offensive weapon against competitors. The author examines the centrifugal tendencies in the British Empire, concluding that the protection policy of Empire Preference will not mitigate them. (See page 224)*

## 3. CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE IMPERIALISTS AND CONFLICTS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

*N. Terentyev. Is there a "united front" of the Imperialists against the Chinese Revolution and the U.S.S.R.? Are Japan and Britain really united against the U.S.A.? Is the conflict between U.S.A. and Japan greater than that between Britain and Japan? A detailed review of the relations between the leading Imperialists in trade, commerce and policy. (See page 230)*

## 4. COMRADE STALIN'S LETTER AND THE PURGING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RELICS

*Z. Serebryansky. This contribution shows that in almost every country where Communist Parties were formed they were unable to break the mass influence of the Social-Democracy because the burden of the relics and traditions of the Second International still weighed heavily upon them. This article is a practical application of Stalin's letter published in No. 20 of the "Communist International" (1931). (See page 238)*



## THE SITUATION IN JAPAN AND THE TASKS OF THE JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTY

**M**ODERN Japan is in the throes of an unparalleled, widespread and ever-growing economic crisis. The foreign trade of Japan has drastically declined during the past years. In 1930, the Japanese exports dropped by 32 per cent. and the imports by 30 per cent. compared with 1929. During the past year of 1931 another sharp decline of the Japanese foreign trade was recorded, exports falling by 22 per cent. and imports by 21.5 per cent. against the previous year. Industry is working at less than half capacity. During the last two years the cotton industry reduced operations by 47 per cent., the engineering industry by 34 per cent., the ship-building industry by 70 per cent., the steel industry by 38.7 per cent., etc.

The reduction of output has been accompanied by a drastic cut of the number of workers employed in industry. During 1930, and especially during 1931, there were mass discharges of workers from various undertakings. The army of unemployed in Japan has reached the enormous figure of three million. But the effect of the crisis has been particularly disastrous in agriculture. The worst to suffer were the rice and silk-breeding plantations. Despite the crop failure of 1931, resulting in a general decrease of agricultural production by 20 per cent., the prices of rice continue to decline, this being accompanied by an ever-growing destruction of the productive forces of agriculture, by the ruination and pauperisation of the peasant masses. The prospect of a financial collapse is also becoming more and more threatening and imminent. The gold reserves during the past two years have sunk to less than half, from 1,124 million yen in January, 1930, to 521 million yen in December, 1931. The private deposits in the Japanese banks have been reduced during the same period by more the 3.5 times.

It is quite clear that the crisis of the national economy of Japan is interconnected with, and directly affected by the modern world economic crisis. But on the other hand, the causes which gave rise to it, its force and depth must be explained by the structure of Japan's economy and social system.

Here it is necessary first of all to emphasise the backward, Asiatic, semi-feudal system prevailing in the Japanese village. The landlord estates play a predominant part in Japanese agriculture. Seventy per cent. of the Japanese farms (3,836,000) are poor farms restricted to less than one hectare of land each. All of these

farmers are forced to lease land from the landlords under the most slavish conditions. It is characteristic that the acreage of the landlords' estates during the last 50 years (that is precisely during the years of the speedy capitalist development of the country) not only has not decreased but has, on the contrary, noticeably increased, from 36 per cent. to 46 per cent. of the total cultivated area. During this half century the ruinous rents, the semi-feudal exploitation not only affected fresh sections of the peasantry but assumed even more oppressive forms. We refer to the steady rise of the rentals during the past decades. Thus if the rent payments for 1886 are taken as 100, those for 1909-1913 are equal to 113 per cent., and those for 1917-1921 to 117 per cent.

The Japanese landlords who do not as a rule engage in agriculture themselves, fleece their tenants of 50-60 per cent. of the total crop. But the Japanese peasantry are forced to carry the burden not only of landlord slavery. To it is added the monstrous yoke of the commercial and usurious capital, their ruthless exploitation by the mortgage banks and monopoly trust companies. In the complexity of these conditions one of the fundamental causes of the constant degradation of Japanese agriculture should be sought, one of the causes of the ever-growing pauperisation of the bulk of the peasantry, and the steady contraction of the home market and the consequent growth of the crisis of the entire national economy.

We shall now pass to the characteristic features of Japanese industry. There is no doubt that Japan has made considerable strides in her industrial development during the past three decades. The coalescence between the banking and industrial capital in the form of gigantic vertical trusts has reached unusually enormous dimensions during the past years. It is a well known fact that 18 monopoly companies control 65 per cent. of the entire national income of the country, and that five of the biggest trusts actually dominate the economic life of the country.

### WAR AND JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT.

There were a series of factors responsible for the rapid industrial development of Japan, for the enormous accumulation of capital and its centralisation in the hands of a small clique of financial magnates. A special rôle in this respect has been played by war as a result of which the plunderous Japanese imperialism consolidated its power



and captured enormous wealth. The colonial robbery and the trophies of victorious wars waged by Japanese imperialism during the past decades served as one of the principal sources of capitalist accumulation. Japanese industry has always developed by leaps and bounds, the different stages of this development being directly connected with plunderous wars of Japanese imperialism. These leaps of Japanese industry are indicated by the following table:

Years	Number of factories		Number of workers		
	With	Without	Total	Women	Total
1897	2,910	4,377	7,287	254,000	437,000
1907	5,207	5,731	10,938	385,000	643,000
1917	14,310	6,656	20,966	713,000	1,280,000
1926	37,141	11,253	48,394	929,000	1,789,000*

The years quoted in this table were not selected at random. These were years following directly upon victorious wars in consequence of which capitalist and landlord Japan obtained tremendous indemnities and war trophies. Thus, in 1895, upon defeating China, Japan captured Formosa, annexed Korea and imposed upon China an indemnity of 350 million yen. After the war against Russian tsarism in 1904/1905, Japan seized half of Sakhalin, the leased territories of South Manchuria and the South Manchurian Railway, and received 200 million roubles in the form of payments for the maintenance of prisoners of war. During the years of the world slaughter (in 1915) Japanese imperialism presented China with the famous 21 demands aiming at the complete colonial enslavement of China. During the same years when the economic connections between the imperialist powers and many of the most important countries of the Pacific and of the Near East were weakened and the demand for industrial products tremendously increased, opening up new prospects before Japanese capitalism, Japan experienced a speculative boom. She created new business enterprises with feverish speed, expanding her industries and trade tremendously. But the blows of the post-war crisis of capitalism received by Japan were only the more painful. Indeed, during the subsequent period when the Eastern and European markets were gradually recaptured by the imperialist countries which had dominated them previously, Japan entered a period of stagnation and depression followed by a deep and unprecedented crisis.

We have seen what an unusually important rôle wars have played in the development of Japanese capitalism. But while gaining on war

Japanese imperialism always lost on peace. This circumstance is due to the fact that the increasing aggressiveness of capitalist-landlord Japan, which runs counter to the plans and schemes of the other imperialist powers, could not but meet with their resistance. Indeed, after the war with China in 1895, Japan, under the pressure of the other powers, including Czarist Russia, was forced to abandon many of her claims. Similarly after the world war, at the Washington Conference of 1922, Japan, on the direct demand of the United States, was forced to evacuate the province of Shantung and withdraw many of her 21 demands. The clash of interests of the imperialist plunderers and the growth of contradictions between them strengthened in turn the aggressiveness of Japanese imperialism. There can be no doubt that the present robber war of Japanese imperialism is directly connected with all the previous stages of its expansion. But it is just as doubtless that Japanese imperialism is aiming to consolidate itself further on the Asiatic continent by this war and prepare for the inevitable new wars between the imperialists for the domination of the Pacific.

Without considering this war situation, or the many feudal relics to which we have referred above, on the basis of which Japanese capitalism has developed, it is impossible to understand its characteristic peculiarities. There are many gaps in the economic situation of Japanese imperialism explaining some of its weaknesses. Particularly noteworthy is its lack of a raw materials base, especially from the point of view of the needs of the war industry. We may further note the predominance of light industry, particularly textiles, and the relative weakness of the metal industry. No less symptomatic is the steady rise of the importance of the war industries; accompanied by the decline of such industries as machine tool construction, for instance, which fell from 10.4 per cent. in 1928 to 8.8. per cent. in 1929. Further, while the centralisation of capital has reached gigantic proportions it does not correspond to the relatively low level of the centralisation of production. From the table quoted above it is easy to see the absolute and very considerable growth of the number of motorless factories during the last decades (from 4,377 in 1897 to 11,253 in 1926).

It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that Japanese industry has grown upon the crutches of State subsidies and has appropriated enormous State funds.

#### CONDITION OF LABOUR.

A description of the characteristics of Japanese capitalism would be incomplete without an

\* To this figure should be added 180,000 workers employed in 380 Government factories, 350,000 miners and about two million non-factory workers.



elucidation of the monstrous forms of the exploitation of the working class and peasantry.

One of the main sources of accumulation of Japanese capital has been the truly monstrous exploitation of the Japanese proletariat and of the bulk of the peasantry. The Japanese working class whose labour productivity is not less than that of European labour, finds itself in the position of colonial labour, represents essentially semi-slave labour and is subjected to merciless exploitation on the part of Japanese capital. Starvation wages accompanied by a long working day, barrack discipline, indentured contract labour, a lack of social legislation and complete political disfranchisement, these features characterise the position of the Japanese working class. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the Japanese peasantry represent essentially semi-serfs while agriculture as a whole in its character, resembles the semi-feudal system of any colony.

Japan has not yet completely broken all the feudal relations. The development of capitalism therefore has always clashed with the narrow limits of the home market. Having failed to break down all the feudal barriers in the path of its development, Japanese capital took the path of the utmost utilisation of the relics of the pre-capitalist relations. Capitalist exploitation has been combined with the robbery of the bulk of the peasantry upon a semi-feudal basis. But the more Japanese capitalism adjusted itself to and utilised these relics of the feudal relations, the more limited did the home market become, the more dependent did it become upon the foreign market, the more powerfully was it prompted on to the road of violent, military expansion of its markets.

Just as in Czarist Russia so in Japan "the newest capitalist imperialism is entangled in a particularly thick mesh of pre-capitalist relations." In an article entitled "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," Lenin wrote:

"In Japan and Russia the monopoly of armed force, vast territories or special facilities for plundering foreigners, China and others partially compensate, partially replace the monopoly of the modern, newest finance capital."

That is precisely why the imperialist policy practised by the dictatorship of finance capital and of the feudal landlords in Japan resembles the features of Russian imperialism of the "semi-feudal type."

In its present plunderous war against China, Japanese imperialism seeks to utilise its monopoly of military force, its opportunity to rob in order to realise some of its annexationist dreams. First of all the Japanese landlords and capitalists are

seeking through the further robbery of the toiling masses of China to find a solution of the sharp and general economic crisis experienced by Japan. Realising their plans of preparation for the coming imperialist war for a new partition of the world, the Japanese imperialists are seeking in the present war against China to entrench themselves on the Asiatic continent, to secure sources of raw materials, especially for the war industry, and to insert beneath Japanese plunderous, military, feudal imperialism a more solid and firm economic foundation. Further, in the present war against China the Japanese landlords and capitalists are making an attempt to establish a firm barrier between China (becoming revolutionised) and the land of victorious socialism, are seeking to create a spring board for a war against the U.S.S.R. on the one hand, and an offensive against the Chinese Soviets on the other. By their present war action the Japanese imperialists are also attempting to stifle the growing revolutionary movement of the toiling masses in Japan itself, to drown in a wave of chauvinism, to stamp out by a new war the growing revolutionary struggle of the Japanese exploited masses.

However, the robber war of Japanese imperialism does not weaken but, on the contrary, sharpens to the extreme the class antagonisms within the country, does not postpone but, on the contrary, accelerates the revolutionary climax in Japan. There are a number of symptoms testifying to the further and unprecedented development of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and peasantry of Japan.

The growing economic crisis could not but most painfully affect the situation of the working class and of the bulk of the peasantry. The offensive of the Japanese capitalists and landlords upon the already miserable living standards of the workers and peasants caused a growth of ever more resolute mass actions of these against the exploiting classes. The last few years present a picture of the steady rise of the strike movement, of the spread of the economic struggle of the Japanese proletariat from one industry to another. Below is a table based upon official and, therefore, underestimated figures on the number of conflicts between labour and capital and on the number of workers involved in the struggles of recent years:

Year.	Number of disputes.	Number of persons involved.
1925	816	89,387
1927	1,202	103,350
1928	1,022	101,893
1929	1,420	112,144
1930	2,289	191,805

During 1931 the strike movement gained



further momentum. Thus, while during the first half of 1930, 728 strikes took place, involving 76,791 persons, during the same period of 1931 there were 879 strikes, involving 84,344 workers. *But what is of still greater importance, during the present imperialist war the strike movement not only has not declined, but on the contrary continues to grow.* Thus, between September and December, 1931, there were 842 strikes against 740 during the previous four months.

But the sweep of the strike movement is not only characterised by these purely quantitative data. The duration of the strikes grows, the number of repeated strikes increases, the workers display ever greater determination in the struggle. The economic battles are more and more frequently combined with an expression of political discontent against the Japanese monarchy and the entire bourgeois-landlord Governmental super-structure. Ever more frequently do these strikes lead to bloody street battles between the Japanese workers and the police.

And this despite the ruthless terror which assumed particularly monstrous dimensions just before and during the war of the Japanese imperialists against China. It is sufficient to point out, for instance, that after an order for the arrest of all the revolutionary workers was issued by the Japanese Government on August 26th, 1931, more than 400 active trade unionists were arrested in Osaka, over 600 in Kobe, 260 in Kyoto, etc. On March 3rd, 1932, a general round-up was carried out by 15,000 police in Tokyo resulting in the arrest of 67,000 persons.

To characterise the acuteness of the struggle we shall cite a few examples indicating how strike battles now proceed in Japan. Thus, the one month's strike (from December 16th, 1931, to January 16th, 1932) of the workers of the Tagi chemical manure factory in the prefecture of Hiogo led during the very first days to a bitter clash with the police in which two workers were killed and 210 thrown into prison. During the strike of the woodworkers in the Akamatsu prefecture 26 workers were arrested. Last February 200 workers were arrested in the Hiogo prefecture during a strike in a leather factory. At the biggest State metal factory, where in January, 1932, the workers protested against discharges and ill-treatment, the police arrested more than 100 people.

In spite of this cruel terror we see not only no decline of the labour movement but on the contrary a growth of the anti-monarchist sentiments, a revolutionisation of ever-growing masses of the Japanese proletariat, a strengthening of the strike struggle, a growth of the anti-war actions

of the working class. Even the fragmentary information which reaches us paints a picture of an interrupted development of the struggle of the working masses against the robber war of Japanese imperialism.

Thus, we learn from the newspapers that at the end of September of last year conferences were held by the left-wing mass organisations of the industrial districts of Tokyo and Yokohama, with the metal and chemical workers' unions at the head, for the purpose of directing the labour struggle in these biggest centres of the war industry into the channels of a mass struggle against the new imperialist war. At the same time was recorded another event when, owing to the arrest of 30 workers, the police succeeded in preventing an anti-war demonstration by the workers of the "Totensi" and "Yamada" silk factories. Further, on October 5th, delegate conferences were held in Tokyo at the tramway park, electrical station, a textile mill, and a tobacco mill, and on October 6th at a light fixtures factory, a metal factory, a musical instrument factory, a rubber mill, a woollen mill, a printing shop and at two labour exchanges, under the following slogans: "Down with the war in Manchuria and Mongolia," "Hands off Manchuria and China," "Down with the imperialist Government of Japan," "Relief for the unemployed to be met from the war Budget," etc.

The newspapers further report that early in October the workers of the dyeing mill in the town of Wakayama distributed anti-war leaflets. In the prefecture of Oamori shop meetings were held under anti-war slogans at a canning mill, and factory delegate conferences were organised in two factories and three printing shops. In the middle of October a strike broke out at a military aeroplane factory near Tokyo. On November 28th the striking workers of seven Tokyo factories organised, under the leadership of a joint strike committee, a united demonstration under the slogans: "Down with the imperialist war," "Against dismissals," etc. On December 12th, at a conference of representatives of twelve glass factories and two unemployed organisations of Tokyo, a resolution was adopted against the imperialist war and in the defence of China and the U.S.S.R. In order to conclude the list of these highly significant signs of the growing struggle of the Japanese workers against the imperialist war we will cite only one more report of the wave of demonstrations against the war and in the defence of China and the U.S.S.R., which swept all the industrial centres of Japan during the anniversary of the October Revolution and which gathered in Tokyo alone more than 2,500 workers.



## THE PEASANTRY.

The Japanese peasants, who are subjected to merciless exploitation, are also far from silent. The sharpening of the agrarian crisis and its effects have created the prerequisites for a mass and constantly growing peasant movement. The following table, drawn up on the basis of official data, conveys an idea of the growth of the agrarian disputes during the last few years. The number of such disputes has been as follows:—

1928	...	...	1,866
1929	...	...	1,949
1930	...	...	2,109
1931	...	...	2,689

It is characteristic that while in the past the majority of the disputes were conducted more or less peaceably, armed clashes have lately become very frequent. We shall cite here also cases of agrarian disputes reported in recent newspapers. Thus, in the middle of January of this year a serious clash occurred between the peasants and the police in the village of Kanagana (in the prefecture of Fukko). This village had up to that time been regarded by the landlords as entirely safe. As a result of this action 94 peasants were arrested and 30 were committed for trial on riot charges. About the same time 600 peasants stormed the court in the prefecture of Niagata, where 22 peasants were being tried, demanding their release. In the middle of January the landlords in the village of Gokamura (in the prefecture of Nagan), fearing the peasants' action which was being prepared by the Tseno peasant union, themselves released the peasants from 70 per cent. of their rentals. The newspapers further report that in January the peasants of six villages of the prefecture of Koti organised a no-rent union. On January 24th, a bloody battle occurred between the police and the peasants of one of the villages in the prefecture of Nagana, in consequence of which 28 persons were arrested. On February 2nd a peasant meeting was held in the village of Yosima, in the prefecture of Saitama, leading to a clash with the police and the arrest of 12 peasants.

The list of these occurrences could be continued, but even the examples already quoted testify sufficiently to the growing struggle of the Japanese peasant masses, a struggle which is assuming ever sharper and more organised revolutionary forms. The intolerable and unbearable situation of the bulk of the peasantry and their awakening to the active struggle against the landlords and the entire police régime may be judged also by the statement of a representative of the ruling bureaucracy, the former Minister of Finance, Inouye (who has since been

killed), who, expressing mortal fear of the coming revolution, stated in February, 1931:

"The peasant masses, which have hitherto served as the most valuable source of exploitation for Japanese capitalism, from which it received its principal weapon in the international competition, cheap labour, are now in a catastrophic situation."

The peasantry is beginning to take a more and more active part in the anti-war movement. Thus, already on September 17th and 22nd of last year, peasant meetings were held in six villages of the prefecture of Toyama. These meetings adopted resolutions against the imperialist war and the Manchurian intervention. Similar anti-war resolutions were adopted in October, 1931, at a conference of the regional council of the left peasant organisations of the prefecture of Gif. In November of the same year an anti-war meeting was held in the village of Hadboni, in the prefecture of Toyama, in which more than 500 peasants participated. The meeting developed into a regular anti-war demonstration. A clash with the police followed, during which the demonstrators shouted: "When we establish the Soviet Government the police and the monarchists will not be left alive." On the following day the police released five peasants who had been arrested during the demonstration, owing to fear of a mass attack upon the police. At the same time anti-war demonstrations were held in the villages of Nametawa and Osawano.

## THE ARMY:

But the most noteworthy development is the spread of anti-monarchist sentiments among the Japanese army, the beginning of grave fermentation among the masses of soldiers and sailors. It is sufficient to recall the exceptional measures systematically taken by the ruling classes of Japan in order to maintain the prestige, discipline and belligerent spirit in the army, and to compare them with the anti-war actions registered in the Japanese army from the very beginning of the hostilities in China, in order to appreciate the entire importance of these processes. Kajiro Sato, one of the ideologists of Japanese imperialism, discussing the question of the inevitable war between Japan and America, consoled himself by talk of the superiority of the Japanese Army over the American. He referred to the mass desertions from the American Army during the world war, boasting that the Japanese Army did not know of any desertions.

"In the Japanese Army the regimental commander must resign, begging to be relieved of his post, if one or two of his men desert from the ranks," wrote the Japanese General. The war



in China at once produced a new phenomenon in the Japanese Army, the refusal of the soldiers and sailors to fight. No matter how few cases of this kind may have been recorded they are symptomatic and highly significant.

Some of these facts, despite the efforts of the Japanese censorship, reach the press and throw light upon the processes developing in the Japanese Army. Thus in one of the newspapers we read the following:

"In the town of Dagu, in the province of Kiansiando, Korea, anti-war handbills addressed to the 80th regiment quartered in the town were distributed at the beginning of December. The handbills were signed by the League against Imperialism. Immediately after the discovery of the handbills a careful search was made in the barracks and all the handbills found were taken away and destroyed. The authorities had to admit that according to all evidence the handbills were distributed by Japanese, since Koreans are strictly forbidden to enter the barracks. Careful searches and arrests were made throughout the city, particularly in the labour quarters. A few days later the authorities succeeded in unearthing a secret communist organisation in which several officers of the 80th regiment took an active part."

The impression which this fact created upon the military authorities may be seen from the fact that the press was forbidden to publish any account of this case. It is only known that 70 Japanese and Koreans, including two officers who participated in the organisation, were arrested.

Similar handbills were distributed in the city of Fengtsian. In the province of Kesianda, in the Kimchen county, the newspapers reported another anti-war demonstration.

The press notes that during the struggle for Shanghai several cases were recorded of Japanese soldiers and sailors refusing to fight. Thus, the Chinese newspaper, "Tavan-Pao," reports that on January 29th more than 200 Japanese soldiers refused to move to the front. They were disarmed and sent back to Japan. On February 11th about 300 soldiers held a meeting in Hongkew. A manifesto was distributed among the soldiers, signed by the revolutionary soldiers' committee, and urging them to refuse to fight against the Chinese soldiers, to prevent the invasion of China and to conduct agitation in this spirit among the masses of the soldiers. According to the Japanese newspaper, "Nichi-Nichi Shimbun," the Japanese steamer, *Shanghai Maru*, which arrived in Shanghai with arms and ammunition, returned to Japan carrying Japanese soldiers aboard who "had become homesick and refused to fight." The

Chinese newspaper, "Eastern Times" reports the refusal of 600 Japanese soldiers to fight, who arrived in Shanghai in February, 1932. On February 20th these soldiers, on orders from the Commander of the Japanese land forces in Shanghai, were disarmed and taken back to Japan in a cruiser, while the Chinese newspaper, "Tavan-Pao," reports that "more than 100 of them were shot and the rest sent back to Japan."

The newspaper, "Changchun-Pao,"\* reports that a Japanese detachment of 300 men dispatched to the Fushun mines in the province of Mukden refused to obey the order and mutinied. General Hondzio had to send a whole brigade to suppress the rebellious soldiers who put up a valiant and determined fight. The battle between the mutineers and the punitive brigade lasted all night until all the mutineers were wiped out. Several meetings in honour of the insurgents were organised in Tokyo.

The following noteworthy facts should also be recorded: In the prefecture of Gif anti-war talks were organised in October with the reservists who passed a resolution refusing to report for provisional mobilisation. Last October, in connection with the mobilisation of a worker in Toyama, a farewell meeting was organised at the station which developed into a demonstration under the slogans: "Down with the imperialist war," "We demand the immediate withdrawal of the Japanese troops from Manchuria and Mongolia," "Improve the condition of the soldiers," "Defend the U.S.S.R.," "Fight for a worker-peasant Government." In the Japanese newspaper, "Niyako" we read that the War Ministry was seriously alarmed by reports from Mukden to the effect that "in the parcels sent to the Manchurian Army leaflets were discovered agitating against the war."

#### SUMMARY.

It is time to sum up all of these facts of the labour, peasant and soldier movement. We are able to note a definite growth of the revolutionary sentiments, the development of an ever-growing revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war, against the exploiting classes, against the military-police monarchy. The signs of this revolutionary upsurge, the symptoms of the coming Japanese revolution, are becoming evident even to the ruling classes themselves. This may easily be seen from a careful reading of the recently published findings of the Committee of Inquiry into the causes of the radical trends among the students. This committee, which

\* We are quoting from comrade Akhmatov's article "On the Front of the War Upon War," see the Manchurian Symposium. (Russian.)



worked under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, was forced, among other things, to note:

"The extreme difference in the standards of living of the capitalists and workers, the extreme impoverishment of the village, a sharpening of the labour and leasehold disputes, an economic decline of the middle classes, the absence of any prospects of the students finding employment upon graduation, the decay and rottenness among political circles, the discontent with the political situation and the parties, a tendency to achieve one's aims by united mass actions, a failure to appreciate the essence of communism and its movement."

When Ministers are forced to draw such conclusions the ground beneath their feet is pretty hot.

But the foreign bourgeois observers are also looking to the future of Japan with increasing alarm. Take for instance, the editorial of the "Peking and Tientsin Times," published on October 10, 1931. Here we read:

"Should everything end in failure, considering the existence of an ineradicable 'plague of dangerous thoughts' which has infected the Japanese intelligentsia, and remembering the intolerable economic situation of the Japanese peasantry and the condition of industry, the consequences for Japan may be immeasurably dangerous."

The revolutionary movement is growing in Japan despite the fact that the Japanese social-democrats of all shades and hues are doing their best to keep the masses away from the revolutionary struggle, to preserve and consolidate the military-police monarchy and the entire system of ruthless exploitation of the workers and peasants practised by the Japanese landlords and capitalists. With unblushing impudence the chairman of the social-democratic party, Abe, addressing the congress of his party, "Siakai Minsuto," in January of this year, did not hesitate to declare:

"I realise that the social-democracy has finally grown into State Socialism. We, Socialists, are supporters of the monarchy."

There is nothing surprising about the fact that in the present war the Japanese social-democracy has taken up an openly imperialist position. It was this party which propounded the theory that Japan is a proletarian country and China a bourgeois country, and that therefore Japan's war against China is a "people's," a "socialist" war, etc. Carrying on active agitation and organisation work in favour of the imperialist war the Japanese social-democracy is holding patriotic

demonstrations, inciting the Japanese imperialists to a war against the U.S.S.R.

The Communist Party of Japan which took up a correct position in regard to the war has already scored a good many successes in the organisation of the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses against the imperialist war, against the exploiting classes and the military-police monarchy. But these successes are far from sufficient. The present situation presents exceptionally important tasks for the Japanese Communists. The Communist Party of Japan constitutes a decisive factor. Upon IT depends the further development of the events, upon IT depends the outcome of the growing revolutionary struggle. The Communist Party of Japan will succeed in performing its part only by overcoming its own weaknesses, its lagging behind the growing activity of the masses, only by strengthening its ranks ideologically and organisationally, by extending its still very weak connections with the great masses of the workers, peasants and city poor and leading their struggle.

But the Communist Party of Japan will not be able to rally the toiling millions to its slogans unless it corrects its mistaken policy on the fundamental question, the question of the character and tasks of the coming revolution in Japan. Thus, in the draft of the political theses worked out by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan and published in April of last year the character of the future revolution is defined as follows: "The coming Japanese revolution is by its character a proletarian revolution with a great scope of bourgeois-democratic tasks."

This erroneous definition of the character of the future revolution is directly connected with the underestimation of the tasks of the agrarian revolution, with a failure to appreciate one of the most important peculiarities of the future revolution which consists precisely of the acuteness of the agrarian question, and the necessity of completely smashing the landlord system. From what we said at the beginning of the article regarding the power of the feudal relics in the country, regarding the landlord slavery, the conclusion must inevitably be drawn that the agrarian question, the struggle of the peasantry under the leadership of the proletariat for the land and against the landlords represents one of the pivots, one of the central tasks of the future revolution in Japan. The underestimation of this factor constitutes a most serious mistake of the Japanese comrades. The Japanese comrades for the same reason are ignoring the revolutionary possibilities of the middle peasantry also and are adhering to the completely mistaken view, which has been refuted by the experience of the



movement, that the middle peasantry in Japan is incapable of a revolutionary struggle against the landlords and the existing régime.

On the other hand, in advancing the thesis of the proletarian character of the future revolution the Japanese comrades are displaying an under-estimation of the rôle of the monarchy, this principal bulwark of the political reaction and of all the relics of feudalism in the country, this enemy of the toiling masses of Japan against which the main blow must be directed. The Japanese comrades ignore the absolutist character of the Japanese monarchy and draw the hasty and incorrect conclusion that "the State Power in Japan is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and landlords under the hegemony of financial capital."

The absolute monarchy which was formed in Japan after the so-called Meiji revolution in 1868 has maintained complete power in all the subsequent years, covering itself up only by pseudo-constitutional forms, but interfering in reality with any limitation of absolutism, with any restriction of the rights and powers of the monarchist bureaucracy. True, the Japanese monarchy which is an historical product of feudalism, formerly based itself upon the landlord class, while now, as a result of the peculiar capitalist development, as a result of the fusion of finance capital with the overwhelming relics of feudalism, it has developed into a bourgeois-landlord monarchy, and is basing itself upon the landlord class on the one hand, and upon the bourgeoisie on the other, thus representing the interests and carrying out the policies of these two exploiting classes. But this class character of the Japanese monarchy does not in any way remove the question of the independent rôle played by the monarchist bureaucracy.

Remember what Lenin said about the Russian monarchy: "... The class character of the Czarist monarchy does not in the least lessen the tremendous independence of the Czarist power and of the 'bureaucracy' from Nicholas II. down to the last local magistrate. This mistake, the overlooking of the autocracy and monarchy, its reduction to a 'pure' rule of the upper classes, was made by the 'recallists'\* in 1908/1909 (see "The Proletarian" supplement to No. 44), by Larin in 1910, and is still being made by certain authors (for instance, M. Alexandrov), and by N. R—kov, who has joined the liquidators." (Lenin, volume XV., page 304).†

The Japanese comrades must ponder seriously these words of Lenin. They must realise that

precisely because of the monarchy, is the country still governed by the most reactionary police régime, are the workers and peasants completely disfranchised, and the toiling masses subjected to the most barbarous economic and political oppression. Now particularly, during the plunderous war started by Japanese imperialism, is the rôle of the monarchist bureaucracy, particularly of the military, its most reactionary and aggressive section, becoming even greater. The Japanese comrades must clearly realise that the future revolution in Japan will be directed primarily against the bourgeois-landlord, military-police monarchy.

What are the basic tasks of the coming stage of the Japanese revolution? They are (1) the overthrow of the monarchy; (2) the liquidation of the landlord system; and (3) the establishment of the seven-hour day and a radical improvement of the situation of the working class. But the revolutionary situation will at once put on the order of the day also the task of merging all the banks into a single national bank, of control over it as well as the big capitalist undertakings, primarily all the concerns and trusts, on the part of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers' Deputies. The economic dislocation, the oppression and ruthless exploitation by trustified and banking capital will prompt the masses to carry out this measure during the very first days of the Japanese revolution.

The worker-peasant revolution in Japan, upon overthrowing the monarchy and removing all the exploiting classes, including the bourgeoisie, from political power, upon establishing the power of the Soviets and carrying out revolutionary measures, will take up the path of speedy development into a Socialist revolution and transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is why we have the right to define the character of the coming revolution in Japan as bourgeois-democratic, with a tendency towards a speedy development into a Socialist revolution.

In calling the future stage of the Japanese revolution bourgeois-democratic we do not in the least deprecate its tasks and importance. "The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class cannot develop sufficiently widely and end in victory until all the more ancient historical enemies of the proletariat are overthrown." (Lenin.) A consistent and determined struggle for the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution will bring about a close alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the capture by the proletariat of the hegemony, this decisive condition of the victory and development of the Japanese revolution.

\* "Otsoivists," Ed.

† Russian edition.



The capture by the proletariat of the hegemony presupposes the utmost strengthening of the Communist Party, particularly the broadening of its connection with the working masses. The Communist Party must take a resolute turn towards work among the masses, must strengthen its rôle in the mass movement. By reinforcing the struggle on two fronts, against the rights as the main danger, and against opportunist passiveness and the "left" sectarian deviations and cliquishness, the Communist Party must secure the necessary ideological consolidation of its ranks. At the same time measures must be taken to strengthen the Communist Party organisationally, to create sound local party committees and a wide network of factory cells. The revolutionary illegal work must be combined with the utilisation of all legal opportunities. It is necessary to systematically improve the methods of conspirative work. The work of the fractions in the mass organisations must be given shape and reinforced.

The capture of the hegemony by the proletariat presupposes the greatest development of the economic struggle of the proletariat, the fanning and organisation of the peasant struggle against the landlords. The Communist Party must work out a programme of vital partial demands of the workers, peasants, unemployed and clerks, adapted to the concrete conditions. Winning the greatest masses of the toilers in the struggle for partial demands, the Communist Party must lead them to the struggle for the basic slogans of the revolution. Carrying out the policy of the united front from below the Communist Party must prepare, widen and sharpen the conflicts between labour and capital, between the peasants and the landlords, securing independent leadership of the battles against the social traitors and the leaders of the yellow trade unions. The party must take every measure to strengthen the revolutionary trade union movement, to overcome a certain self-isolation of the left trade unions; the party must stimulate and broaden the spontaneous eagerness of the working masses for organisation, providing it with flexible leadership.

The capture of the hegemony by the proletariat presupposes a resolute and tireless struggle of the Communist Party for the masses against the social-democrats of all shades and hues. In the every-day struggle of the working class and peasantry for an improvement of their material and political conditions it is necessary to systematically expose the treacherous rôle and the

imperialist essence of the Japanese social-fascists, the struggle must be sharpened particularly against the so-called "left" social-democrats who are attempting more than the others to cover up their treacherous actions by radical phrases, by verbal fireworks.

The capture of the hegemony by the proletariat presupposes an able direction by the Communist Party of all the manifestations of discontent, protest and struggle of the great masses of the workers, peasants and city poor into the channel of the political struggle against war and the military-police monarchy. The entire activity of the Communist Party must now be subjected to the fundamental task of developing the struggle for the vital demands of the masses in close connection with the struggle against the war and the monarchy. Being guided by the object of converting the imperialist war into a civil war the Communist Party of Japan must direct its entire oral and printed agitation and propaganda against the imperialist war, exposing its plunderous character and the rôle in it of the leaders of the social-democracy and of the trade unions. The Party must demand the immediate withdrawal of the troops from China and fight for the full independence of that country. The Communist Party must resolutely fight against the policy of the monarchy and of its social-democratic henchmen directed towards the establishment of class peace within the country. The Communist Party must seek to develop the strike struggle to the utmost.

A particularly responsible and important task devolves upon the Japanese Communists in connection with the vigorous preparations of the Japanese imperialists for an armed intervention against the U.S.S.R. The Communist Party must propagate by all means the successes of the Socialist construction, the achievements of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. and the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party must expose and prevent the Japanese imperialists' preparation for war against the land of victorious Socialism.

Such are the main tasks of the Japanese Communists at the present time. Under the central slogan of agitation, "A people's revolution against the imperialist war and the police monarchy, for rice, for land, for freedom, for a workers'-peasants' Government," the Communist Party of Japan must rally the million strong masses, become converted into a truly mass party which is firmly and confidently leading the masses to the coming revolutionary clash.



## BRITAIN'S TRANSITION TO PROTECTION AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE SITUATION

**B**RITAIN'S traditional policy of free trade was built up on the basis of her early industrial development and her monopoly of the world market in the middle of last century. It was continued after the emergence of rival national capitalist groups, on the basis of the financial and shipping monopoly which had grown from the industrial monopoly. Its abandonment, and the adoption of a policy of general protective tariffs, was made necessary by the weakening of the financial and shipping monopoly, especially since the war, culminating in the disastrous fall in the income of British imperialism from its investments and shipping services abroad which has resulted from the world crisis of capitalism. The factors which have forced British imperialism to adopt a policy of protection are not, however, temporary and transient, but arise from the undermining of its parasitic base, and the aims which British imperialism hopes to achieve through protection involve the restoration of that basis, though in a new form. But here British interests clash with those of the Dominions. The crisis which has brought the issue of protection to the front in Britain has also placed urgent problems before the bourgeois groups in the Dominions, and is forcing them too to seek a way out along the lines which are in fundamental conflict with the British imperialist conception of "empire economic unity."

### THE BASIC PROBLEM OF PROTECTION.

In introducing the new import duties in the House of Commons on February 4, 1932, Chamberlain showed that the balance of payments between Britain and other countries had changed, between 1929 and 1931, from a favourable balance of £100,000,000 to an unfavourable balance of £113,000,000, and stated:

"These figures establish the vital necessity of any action which it is in the power of the Government to take which may restore the balance of payments once more to the right side."

In this decline of the balance by £213,000,000, no less than £186,000,000 was due to the decline in "invisible" exports—receipts from shipping and investments abroad. But a further most serious feature of the situation was that the volume of imports into Britain had remained practically unchanged, although the volume of British exports had fallen by 38 per cent. British capitalism had continued its largely parasitic consumption, although the financial basis for it—the income from shipping and investments

abroad—became more and more restricted. British capitalism no longer has a surplus income which could be invested abroad, and therefore British export of capital has heavily declined, while export of goods has also fallen, owing to the world economic crisis and the contraction of the colonial markets and to the relative backwardness of British industrial technique.

These are the factors which were at the bottom of the exchange crisis which drove Britain off the gold standard, and they are the factors which have driven British imperialism to a general "protective" tariff, as a combined offensive and defensive measure intended to "restore the balance of payments once more to the right side."

### THE DEPRECIATION OF THE £.

Immediately after the fall of the £ it was thought that the lower value of the £ would have "the effect of a protective tariff without its disadvantages"—it would automatically and immediately reduce imports, and, by the lowering of costs measured in gold, enable British manufacturers to quote lower prices and win an increased share of sales in the world market. But the actual course of events was not altogether "according to plan." An immediate result was that many other countries were also driven off the gold standard, so that, in relation to these countries, British imperialism was not able to reap the advantages of the depreciated £. But of even greater importance was the fact that the *world crisis continued and deepened*; the volume of international trade declined still further, and prices (in gold) continued to fall. Under the pressure of still accumulating stocks, prices of commodities in the gold standard countries were marked down towards the sterling equivalent, instead of the sterling equivalent rising towards the gold prices. As a result, commodities imported into Britain after the fall in the £ in many cases cost little more than existing stocks in Britain (bought before the fall in the £), and therefore *imports continued to flow in Britain*. On the other hand, British exports as a whole showed no substantial improvement, the slight increase in the export of textile goods being counterbalanced by declines in the export of coal, machinery and other items. This was partially due to the continuance of previously existing factors, but also to the measures taken by a whole series of countries to protect their own markets against British goods offered at prices based on the depreciated £—the fixing of import quotas, as in the case of coal; special tariffs against



Britain, and other measures including restrictions on foreign exchange transactions. The so-called "automatic tariff" of the depreciated £ had therefore failed to bring any relief to the adverse balance of trade, and the problem was becoming more urgent every day.

#### THE TRANSITION TO PROTECTION.

A general protective tariff was therefore an immediate and vital necessity for British imperialism, and the "National" Government began to take action immediately after its election. "Abnormal importations duties" were at once placed on a large number of items, which were however relatively unimportant in the total number of imports. This was only a preliminary step, and on February 4, 1932, the Government announced a programme of a general protective tariff of 10 per cent. on all imports (except those already liable to duty under previous legislation). The programme of February 16th contained certain important items of import which were altogether excluded from the tariff—chiefly wheat, meat and wood pulp; the special interest of these exclusions is that they are products of the Dominions, and no scheme of Empire preference would have importance if Britain's imports of these items from foreign countries remained untaxed. Therefore, this question of taking foreign wheat, etc., remains open as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the Dominions. So far as the interests of British wheat growers are concerned, these have been protected by fixing a quota for British wheat in milling, an extension of which would provide a basis for Empire preference.

The tariff system now in operation in Britain includes:

- (a) Duties for revenue purposes on a number of food and other items of consumption—tea, sugar, cocoa, etc. These date from last century, but were considerably increased during and after the war. It is to be noted that they are chiefly Empire *colonial* products, and the Empire preference (of about one-sixth of the duty) is in the main a benefit accruing to British imperialist companies.
- (b) The so-called "McKenna" duties (33½%) on special items, of which the most important are motors and artificial silk; these date from the period after the war, and are of a definitely protectionist character, the development of concentration on the British motor industry having undoubtedly been helped by them.
- (c) The "abnormal importation" duties (averaging 50 per cent.), which date from November, 1931.

- (d) A general tariff, dating from March, 1932, on imports not previously taxed, with some exceptions.
- (e) In all cases, there is either exemption or a special preferential rebate for imports from the British empire.

#### FROM DEFENSIVE TO OFFENSIVE.

Apart from the general tariff of 10 per cent., the Government has taken legislative power to levy special penal tariffs (up to 100 per cent) on imports from other countries which may take retaliatory steps to exclude or restrict imports from Britain. This provision is in itself an admission of the fact that Britain's transition to protection is not taking place in a vacuum or in a "normal" situation, but in a condition of acute economic crisis throughout the capitalist world, with every imperialist group facing severe competition within its own market as well as in the world market outside. The "restoration of the balance of payments once more to the right side" involves therefore not merely "defensive" tariffs to protect the British market for British capitalists, but also "offensive" tariffs as a weapon to force British exports through the tariff walls and other defensive measures taken by other countries. The fighting character of this provision for special penal tariffs up to 100 per cent. was shown by Chamberlain's statement on February 4:

"We mean to use it for negotiations with foreign countries . . . and we think it prudent to arm ourselves with an instrument which shall at least be as effective as those which may be used to discriminate against us in foreign markets."

The measures which were taken by other capitalist states to check the British competition based on the depreciated £ are a clear indication of the struggle which must develop from Britain's transition to protection. The sharpest struggle actually developed on coal, which is not imported into Britain, but is one of Britain's important exports (before the war, one-third of Britain's coal production was exported, and in 1929, one-quarter; even in 1931 the coal exports were valued at £35,000,000 or 9 per cent. of the total value of British exports). Both in France and in Germany the quota of coal imports from Britain was drastically reduced, and in Poland a prohibitive increase (250 per cent.) was made in the railway charges on imported coal. The British Government attempted to negotiate for the removal of these restrictions, but found itself powerless. Negotiations with the French Government secured only an abatement, in the case of coal, of the special tariff of 15 per cent. imposed by France when Britain was forced off



the gold standard, but this was a meaningless concession, as the restriction on imports of British coal was maintained unchanged (at about one-third of the 1929 figure). In the case of the similar restriction on British coal imports into Germany, long negotiations took place without result. These are the first shots in the long struggle on which British imperialism has embarked with its transition to protection, and it has not felt its position secure enough to use the weapon of penal tariffs which Chamberlain boasted of to the House of Commons on February 4th. Meanwhile, the exports of coal, instead of rising on the basis of the depreciated £, have fallen, pits are being closed in South Wales and on the North-East Coast, and the number of unemployed miners is again rising.

The depreciation of the £ has not even had any marked effect in increasing the exports of cotton goods. The very slight increase recently shown is almost entirely due to higher exports to China and Hong Kong—the reflection of the boycott of Japanese goods in China. The export of woollen goods continues to fall. Another most important item of British exports — machinery — shows a decline in the first two months of this year as compared with last year. In every case the 1932 exports, even where they show a fractional rise as compared with 1931, are only from one-half to two-thirds of the exports for the corresponding period of 1929. The depreciation of the £, constituting an export bonus of 25 to 30 per cent. for British imperialism in competition with its most powerful rivals still on the gold standard, has not been able to improve the desperate position of British imperialism in its struggle for markets.

#### THE CHECK TO IMPORTS.

On the other hand, the depreciation of the £ combined in certain cases with the “abnormal importations duties” has had some effect in reducing the imports of foreign manufactures into Britain. For the first two months of 1932, when both these factors were fully in operation, British imports of foreign manufactures fell by £6,000,000 as compared with 1931—in spite of a special increase of imports in February, 1932, to anticipate the new general tariff of 10 per cent. which became effective on March 1st. Imports of cotton and woollen manufactures were almost entirely stopped — the countries affected being France, Belgium, Germany and Italy. It was on the basis of this protection of the home market, and not of any general increase in sales for export, that the British cotton and woollen industries have recently expanded production. But imports of iron and steel actually increased in comparison with the same period of 1931, the

main countries of origin being Belgium, France and Germany—all still on the gold standard. This fact is indicative of the severity of the competition which British imperialism has to meet in those branches of industry in which British technique is still relatively low—even a 25 to 30 per cent. depreciation of the £ is ineffective where Britain's competitors have a far higher technical level and are desperately seeking markets for their mass production.

In general, however, the “automatic tariff” of the depreciated £ and the actual tariffs already in force in January and February have been effective in reducing British imports of manufactured goods, and to that extent in widening the internal market for the products of British capitalist industry. But the increase in British production involves also an increase in the imports of raw materials and food—it is not in itself a very effective factor in reducing Britain's adverse balance of trade. Moreover, the internal market is entirely inadequate for British capitalism. *The problem of increasing exports is therefore vital, and it cannot be solved by a protective tariff covering only the home market.*

#### THE TRADE DEFICIT CONTINUES.

The total trade figures for the first two months of 1932 show the relatively small effect of the combined depreciation of the £ and the “abnormal importations duties.” Total imports were £132,468,000, total exports £71,826,000, resulting in an adverse balance of over £60,000,000 or at the rate of £360,000,000 for a full year. For the first two months of 1931 the adverse balance was £38,000,000 (for the whole year it was £409,000,000). These figures provide little comfort for British imperialism, especially as the decline in “invisible” exports (income from shipping and investments abroad) undoubtedly still continues, on the basis of the world economic crisis and the continued fall in gold prices.

The relative failure of the measures already in force shows that the new general tariff of 10 per cent. cannot have any considerable influence on the situation. The rise of the £ which took place in March (in relation to gold standard currencies) was itself equivalent to 10 per cent.—thus negating the effect of the tariff so far as Britain's main competitors are concerned. It is clear that considerably higher tariffs will have to be enforced in order even to protect the internal market, and that the path of protection leads upward in a steep gradient.

#### PROTECTION AND RATIONALISATION.

Protection is the traditional weapon of a growing capitalism. Both in Germany and in the



United States it facilitated the growth of capitalist industry by the exclusion of foreign manufactures, especially those of British industry; it facilitated concentration and the development of a relatively high technique. Protection in Britain to-day is also intended to facilitate the concentration and technical improvement of British industry. In Chamberlain's parliamentary language:

"We hope by the judicious use of this system of protection to enable and to encourage our people to render their methods of production and distribution more efficient."

The complete protection of the British market (by considerably higher tariffs than this first instalment of 10 per cent.) is intended to establish a preserve within which higher profits can be made by the most powerful groups, and on this basis it is hoped that the capital required for technical reconstruction can be secured, while at the same time the protection of the internal market will help to solve the problem of sale of the products of mass production methods.

It is true that the fundamental difficulties which have hitherto prevented any rapid improvement in British technique will remain—the relics of the past period of British capitalism and particularly the enormous number of separate concerns in many vital industries. Moreover, in the present situation of imperialist rivalry, the groups which benefit from protection are not confined to the nationals of the country which imposes a tariff. The "McKenna" duties encouraged the growth of the British motor industry, but Ford, Citroën and other foreign manufacturers set up their factories in Britain and shared in the resultant profits. Under the pressure of the crisis in their own countries, and in anticipation of a rapid heightening of the tariff wall in Britain, foreign capitalist groups are entering Britain and setting up or buying factories which will also be "protected" by the National Government's measures. This will be a factor preventing that complete concentration and monopoly which British imperialism hopes to secure within Britain on the basis of which rationalisation can be rapidly carried through.

But in any case the British market is utterly inadequate for the productive capacity of British industry. The position of British capitalism to-day is fundamentally different from the position of early German and United States capitalism, which had the possibility of decades of growth before they exhausted their own internal markets. Protection of the British market is only a beginning; the increased competitive power in the world market which is to come from protection and the rationalisation based on it is too far off to bring any quick relief, too hypothetical in

relation to the immensely superior technique of German and United States imperialism. Even the very possibility of mass production methods depends on winning new markets *now*. The position of the trade balance emphasises the need for immediate results from any action taken. Hence the renewed attempt of British imperialism to secure an extension of the tariff wall to surround the Empire.

#### "EMPIRE ECONOMIC UNITY."

The general tariff of 10 per cent. which has just been established in Britain does not apply to imports from any part of the Empire. So far as the Crown colonies are concerned—the colonies directly administered by the Colonial Office—steps are being taken to secure corresponding preferential tariffs for British products, either by the imposition in each colony of an additional tariff on non-Empire goods or by a rebate from existing tariffs for British goods. In the case of the Crown Colonies, and also India, British imperialism can apply imperial preference by direct administrative acts, although in India certain formalities will have to be observed. But from the standpoint of the volume of trade and market possibilities, the Dominions are as important to British imperialism as the colonies and India. The inclusion of the Dominions in the tariff scheme of British imperialism, however, presents difficulties of a very serious nature.

The policy of "empire economic unity" is not new. Repeated Empire Conferences since the war have discussed the issues involved, and have failed to agree on any proposals which are of any real value to British imperialism, in spite of political concessions to the Dominions. The fundamental factor is the existence in each of the Dominions of separate capitalist groups whose relations with British imperialism are not those either of identity or of agents, compradores, for British imperialism. Like all capitalist groups, they want to buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the highest market; they want to accumulate capital and to set it to work to produce profits for themselves. And the conflict of interests between these groups and British imperialism has become more evident, more conscious, in proportion to the rise of their industry on the one hand and the decline of British imperialism on the other. The present world crisis of capitalism has made the issues sharper both for British imperialism and for the Dominion groups.

#### THE CRISIS IN THE DOMINIONS.

The catastrophic fall in the prices of raw material and agricultural products during the last two years has brought disaster to the Dominions

and has strengthened the forces of disintegration within the Empire. In Australia, imports have fallen from £161,000,000 in 1927 to £95,000,000 in 1930 and £44,000,000 in 1931. This fall reflects the smaller purchasing power due to the decline of revenue from Australian exports, combined with the cessation of British and United States exports of capital to Australia owing to the crisis which has engulfed industry as well as agriculture in Australia. Some measure of the industrial crisis is given by the New South Wales figures of output of factories and works, which fell from £185,000,000 in 1928-29 to £118,000,000 in 1930-31. Figures for the current year will undoubtedly show a further sharp decline. This is the background of the Lang "repudiation" of interest payments and the support this policy has won among bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements in that state. The trade figures for New Zealand, which are also now available, show similar features. In Canada the economic situation is even more serious with agricultural prices that barely cover transport costs, and the most important branches of industry working at little more than one-fifth of capacity.

In this general crisis and the consequent check to the growth of industry from which the accumulated profits of the Dominions bourgeoisie are largely drawn, the "empire economic unity" advocated by British imperialism, which means the admission on privileged terms of British products — will, if carried to its logical conclusion, mean the abandonment of the capital investments of the Dominions bourgeoisie and the reversal of the tendencies to industrial development. The Canadian reaction to the depreciation of the £ in September last was significant. An immediate check on any growth of imports from Britain was imposed, in the form of a special rate (not the depreciated rate) for the calculation of duty on imports from Britain. A similar reaction was shown in South Africa, where a special duty was imposed on British products, and where also, in spite of pressure from British imperialist interests, the gold standard was maintained. The financial and exchange position of Australia made it impossible for the Australian Government at that time to take any action, but the pressure from industrial interests has resulted in the Government's decision, announced in March, to bring in new and higher tariffs. The tendency not only to an independent development which cuts right cross the British imperialist conception of "empire economic unity," but also to the emergence of interests which are themselves imperialist, is shown in the statement made by

the Australian Commonwealth Minister of Trade and Customs:

"The unemployment problem would be solved when the largest manufacturing industries were on the export line. Australia had unparalleled raw material resources and ideal manufacturing conditions, but high costs meant that she exported practically nothing" ("Times," March 26th, 1932).

This statement, made in reply to a Trades Hall deputation protesting against the new import duties, was a declaration of war on the standards of the Australian workers, but it was equally a repudiation of the British conception of "empire economic unity" in which the rôle of exporter of manufactured products is reserved for British imperialism. In fact, it was a declaration of independence on the part of an Australian imperialism which is ready to adventure beyond the Solomon Islands and to enter into the mighty battle for the world market.

#### THE IRISH CONFLICT REOPENED.

The disintegrating forces at work within the Empire have also come to the surface in the Irish Free State with the coming to power of the De Valera Government, and show most clearly in De Valera's threat to stop the payment of the Land Annuities to Britain, and even to reclaim the sums paid by the Cosgrave Government. These annuities are the interest and redemption payments in respect of loans made through the British Government (from 1885 onwards) for the purchase of land by the small farmers. They are collected by the Irish Free State Government from the farmers and transferred to Britain. De Valera's programme of withholding them does not mean that the burden on the small farmers, now in the throes of the agricultural depression, will be lifted; the £3,000,000 a year will still be collected from the farmers, but De Valera proposes to use it, not for the British bond-holders, but for the Irish bourgeois elements—to ease the Irish budget position and perhaps to lighten the burden of taxation on the Irish bourgeoisie whose prospects of industrial development behind the tariff wall of the Irish Free State have been cut away by the present crisis. De Valera's threat to put an end to the oath of allegiance to the British Crown is only the symbol of the economic clash which appears both in the proposed stoppage of the transfer of the Land Annuities and in the alleged plans to raise the tariff wall against Britain. The rejoinder made by J. H. Thomas on behalf of British imperialism—that the imposition by Britain of tariffs on imports from the Irish Free State would be its reply to the stoppage of the Land Annuities—is not an



indication of "empire economic unity" but of precisely that economic rivalry which characterises the trade policy of the rival imperialist groups throughout the world.

#### THE NEW PHASE IN EMPIRE RELATIONS.

The world crisis of capitalism has merely brought to the surface the contradictions which have developed within the framework of the British Empire. In the colonial areas properly so called (including India), where British rule is openly an alien rule in countries with low economic development and considerable relics of feudalism and pre-capitalist relations, the imperialist exploitation remains in the form of keeping these areas as sources for the food and raw material requirements of British capitalism and as markets for its manufactures. In connection with such areas, the British imperialist conception of "empire economic unity" does not imply any change in the existing relationships, but merely an intensified and better "protected" exploitation by British imperialism. In connection with the Dominions, however, where in the main the system of production has developed as an extension of British capitalism, the British imperialist designs of "empire economic unity" have to take into account the fact that these "children" of British imperialism have grown up and established their own households. The productive system in the Dominions is not still entirely controlled by British imperialism; it is no longer simply an extension of British capitalist production. The settlers have developed their own group interests; their separate accumulation has been the basis for the development of a separate capitalism; and the Dominion form of Constitution is a political expression of this change.

The development of these separate groups within the framework of the British empire, with their separate accumulation and building up of separate capitalist industries, has gradually weakened the control of British imperialism over their State machine, and at the same time reduced the rôle of the Dominions as consumers of British manufactured products. In the case of Canada, the penetration of United States imperialism has accelerated the process of separation from dependence on British imperialism. As a market for British manufactures, Canada is a rapidly declining asset of British imperialism. In 1929 Britain contributed only 15 per cent. (£11,000,000) of Canada's imports, while the U.S.A. share was 71 per cent. (£190,000,000). The growth of Canada's industrial production is shown by the increase in the net output from £117,000,000 in 1911 to £374,000,000 in 1928. But Canadian production is not merely for the

internal market; in the boom year 1929, Canada exported to Britain alone motor cars and parts to the value of over £1,000,000, and £5,500,000 to other European countries. Canadian capitalism enters the world market as a separate imperialist group, more closely linked to United States imperialism than to British imperialism.

To a certain extent the position is similar in Australia and South Africa. Australian capitalism too has entered the stage when it is striving to find markets for its manufactures. In all the Dominions the crisis has raised very sharply the problem of finding markets, and the approach of the bourgeoisie of the Dominions to this problem is precisely the approach of all imperialist groups, including British imperialism. And the weakening of the parasitic basis of British imperialism, with the consequent decline in accumulation available for export to the Dominions, has reached a catastrophic stage during the present world crisis. In these circumstances an attempt to find a solution through an "empire economic unity" which does not correspond to the needs of the Dominions bourgeoisie is foredoomed to failure.

#### UNITY OR DISINTEGRATION?

The uncertainty with which British imperialism is approaching the Ottawa Conference is shown by the "National" Government's empire policy in connection with the new general tariff of 10 per cent. The tariff does not apply to the Empire—at present. As indicated above, exemption from the tariff will continue for the colonies, which will give Britain (at Britain's command) at least a corresponding preference. *But the exemption will apply to the Dominions only until the Ottawa Conference.* British imperialism thus announces in advance that it is prepared to sell this preference to the Dominions if they will accept its terms, but that it is equally prepared to use its new protection against the Dominions if need be; it is prepared to fight them as it is prepared to fight other imperialist groups.

But if British imperialism is to gain any considerable advantage from protection—if protection is to lead to rationalisation and concentration of industry, with mass production—protection must not be confined to the home market, but must be extended to the whole empire. And with the rising capacity of industrial production in the Dominions, protection of those markets (or of Empire markets generally) against foreign imperialist production is not enough. British imperialism is faced with the task of inducing the Dominion groups, already developing towards imperialism, to protect British industry against even their own manufactures. British imperial-

ism must turn back the tide as the result of its negotiations at Ottawa.

What has it to offer the Dominions in return for concessions? Only protection or preference for the raw materials and agricultural products of the Dominions. But these branches of production (with the transport of the products) are precisely those which to a great extent still form an "extension" of British capitalism, are still largely controlled from Britain. Protection or preference in Britain for these products of the Dominions is relatively useless for the Dominions bourgeoisie. To the latter, British imperialism has practically nothing to offer except the Union Jack and the Prince of Wales—useful enough for decorative purposes, but without exchange value in a world filled with surplus commodities in search of markets.

And because British imperialism has nothing to offer, it is approaching the Ottawa Conference with a threat—the threat of tariffs even against the Dominions, the threat of open economic struggle. The failure of the Ottawa Conference will therefore not be a secret affair, concealed in high-sounding phrases; it will be open and noisy, marking the stage of conflict within the empire. But it will also mark the defeat of Britain's protectionist policy in the only form in which it offers any solution of the crisis of British imperialism. And it will mark, too, the depth of the crisis facing British imperialism, and destroy one more of the illusions with which the Labour Party and the I.L.P. are striving to hold back the British workers from the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

## CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE IMPERIALISTS AND CONFLICTS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

N. TEREITYEV

"The most important result of the world economic crisis is that it has laid bare and sharpened the contradictions inherent in world capitalism.

"(a) It is laying bare and sharpening the *antagonisms between the most important imperialist countries*, the struggle for markets, the struggle for raw materials, the struggle for export of capital. To-day none of the capitalist States are satisfied any longer with the old distribution of spheres of influence and colonies. They see that the relation of forces has changed, and that correspondingly markets, sources of raw materials, spheres of influence, etc., must be divided afresh."

(Stalin's Speech at the XVI. Congress of the C.P.S.U.).\*

THE world crisis of capitalism has sharpened to the utmost the crisis of Japanese capitalism and has encouraged the Japanese bourgeoisie to force on the offensive in China and thus to begin a new imperialist war. On the other hand the same world crisis has for the first time since the war of 1914-1918 created a situation which in a sense is favourable to the expansive plans of Japan. In truth, the financial catastrophe in Germany, the abolition of the gold standard in England and the deepening of the crisis in America has upset the whole system of world capitalist credit. The presence of millions and tens of millions of unem-

ployed, the intense unrest, the dissatisfaction of the broad masses of the people—all this to a considerable extent has tied the hands not only of the European powers as regards Japan, but also of America as well. At the same time the intensification of the world crisis very considerably sharpened the aggressive tendencies of the world bourgeoisie to China, which meant that the resistance of some of the Powers at any rate towards Japanese intervention in Manchuria, which was to lead to international intervention in China and its partition, was of necessity weakened. Finally, what is most important, the sharpening of the anti-Soviet tendencies of the world bourgeoisie, again as a result of the development of the world crisis, mobilised on Japan's side all the most aggressive elements of world reaction, who dreamed of transforming Japanese intervention in Manchuria into intervention against the U.S.S.R.\*

The present events in the Far East are a result of all this, and the direct outcome of the world crisis of capitalism, including the seizure and actual annexation of Manchuria, and the war which Japanese imperialism began in China proper and which it is now trying to continue in the form of international intervention against the Chinese revolution. The Japanese plan for the creation

\* The theme of this article is an analysis of the contradictions among the imperialists on the Pacific coast. Consequently we do not intend going into the question of the danger of intervention against the U.S.S.R., as this question is outside the scope of our subject and demands treatment in a special article.



of a neutral zone around the five biggest Chinese ports, side by side with the efforts of Japanese diplomacy to transfer the "Shanghai question" to discussion at a Round Table Conference of the Powers interested, proves beyond all doubt that Japan is concretely seeking to partition China and reckons to obtain the lion's share of the spoil. The concentration in Shanghai of ever-increasing numbers of soldiers, the most active assistance in the form of arms and munitions given to the Japanese troops by all the Imperialist Powers, show that international intervention has already begun. It is quite obvious that in the course of this intervention there will be a considerable deepening of contradictions which will raise the immediate danger of armed clashes among the imperialists.

The alignment of forces in the struggle of the imperialists for domination in the Pacific cannot be isolated from the alignment of forces on a world scale. If we leave aside considerations and factors of second-rate importance, we find that in the main the alignment of forces amounts to the presence of a three-cornered conflict between three leading Imperialist Pacific Powers—America, England and Japan; a conflict which, it goes without saying, is developing in co-relationship with the cardinal contradiction of our epoch, i.e., the contradiction between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R.

#### ANGLO-AMERICAN CONTRADICTIONS.

"The most important of the imperialist contradictions," said Comrade Stalin in his report to the XVI Congress of the C.P.S.U., "is that between the U.S.A. and England. Both in the sphere of export of manufactured goods and in the sphere of export of capital, the struggle is going on mainly between the U.S. and England. It is enough to take up any economic journal, any document concerning the export of commodities and capital, to convince oneself of this. South America, China, the colonies and dominions of the old Imperialist States form the main arena of struggle. The superiority of forces in this struggle—and very definite superiority—is on the side of the United States." The Anglo-American struggle is developing in all the countries of the Pacific and is, therefore, one of the most essential considerations in the Pacific problem. In the British Dominions this struggle goes on in the main along economic lines: it should be emphasised that American capital, which is penetrating into the outlying parts of the British Empire, has gained the biggest victories in the Pacific Ocean Dominions of England, especially in Canada and Australia (in 1929, 68 per cent. of Canada's imports came from the United States, while only

16.8 per cent. of them came from England; only 43.4 per cent. of Australian imports were from England, while America's share rose to 24.6 per cent.; while in New Zealand imports, America's share was 10 per cent. in 1913 and rose to 19 per cent. in 1929).

The same economic struggle which is developing into a political struggle is going on in South and Central America; as this struggle proceeds each side uses the native feudal-bourgeois elements, erects and destroys governments, organises *pronunciamento* "revolutions." The acute situation in connection with trade rivalry in the four South American States, situated on the Pacific coast—Chili, Peru, Ecuador and Columbia, can be seen from the following figures: In 1926 America's share in the imports of these countries was 32.6 per cent., 46.2 per cent., 42.4 per cent., and 47.6 per cent. respectively, while England's share was 17.2 per cent., 15.6 per cent., 22.6 per cent., and 16.2 per cent. In Mexico and the republics of Central America (Panama, Costa-Rica, San Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, which during the last ten years have been converted completely into American coffee and banana plantations) the superiority of American Imperialism is even more sharply defined; but despite this the violent struggle continues, complicated in Central America by the territorial-strategic game which is going on between England and America in close proximity to the Panama Canal, and in connection with the problem of guaranteeing the safety of this canal which is of such enormous importance for American domination in the Pacific Ocean.

On the Asiatic coast England owns an enormous colonial Empire—India, Ceylon, Burma, Straits-Settlements, the Malay States, Borneo, Hongkong—and to a considerable extent rules over Indonesia with her 50 million population, where Dutch Imperialism "in actual fact is more and more forced to play a secondary rôle of, as it were, "commissionaire," and which at the same time has to fulfil the function there of gendarme and hangman" (resolution of the VI. E.C.C.I. Congress on the revolutionary movement in colonial countries).

India's rôle in the British Empire is well known. As for Malay and Indonesia, it is here that the overwhelming majority (in Indonesia—one-third) of the world's output of rubber is to be found; the monopoly is in the hands of English capital and is the object of an extremely acute struggle between England and America, which last country is the chief rubber consumer. Here are considerable oil resources—in fact the only important oil wells in Eastern Asia. Here are also to be found

large deposits of iron ore (in Indonesia alone, ten times more than the Japanese deposits and four times more than the Chinese), and tin (Dutch East Indies supply one-fourth of the world output of tin). Backed up by her numerous bases and her "colonial monopoly," acquired during a long process of colonial development, England naturally defends the *status quo* here, while American capital, having no pretensions at present as regards territorial expansion, energetically advances along the whole front, penetrating both into Malay and Indonesia and, to a certain extent, into India, and striving to obtain a more favourable alignment of forces for herself. Finally in CHINA, which we might perhaps call the most important theatre of struggle, American capital not only violently competes with England in all the most important spheres of trade and as regards all the most important objects of capital investment (this competition is especially severe around the markets connected with cotton, oil products, railway equipment, electrical apparatus, machines, etc.); American capital is not only striving to seize all the most important sources of raw materials (wool, leather, vegetable oil products, etc.), but it is preparing to gain control of the economic and political key positions of this country, using its political influence extensively, putting forward its own favourites among the Chinese generals against those of the English and Japanese, organising military-technical and financial help to these generals (American military instructors, advisers, supply of war materials, aviation, etc.), and by means of these generals gradually gaining predominance on the entire Chinese market. The economic and political enfeeblement of British Imperialism as a result of the world war is compelling her to retreat before the pressure of American capital and to take up a defensive attitude all along the line.

In the political sense Anglo-American antagonism in the Pacific has been especially acute during the last few years, and in particular has turned out to be one of the most decisive factors of the international situation which has been brought about in connection with the present intervention of Japan in China. Despite all the traditional talk in the English press about Anglo-American friendship, there is not the slightest doubt that it was just this antagonism which opened up the way for Japan to seize Manchuria and to invade China proper; that it was just the absence of support from England which, for the time being, paralysed America's counter-advance. The ambiguous, passive policy of the English Cabinet, which on the whole has favoured Japan, is in no way an expression of real common interests between

British and Japanese imperialism in China, but in particular an expression of the combination of Anglo-American contradictions and the anti-Soviet, anti-Chinese policy of the English bourgeoisie. The fact that American capital is already deeply involved in the British Dominions and has enormous political influence there, and that in view of this the position which the Dominions themselves take up in this connection acts to a certain extent as a brake upon the anti-American policy of Britain, can obviously only help the further deepening of these already acute contradictions.

ANGLO-JAPANESE CONTRADICTIONS.

In spite of the considerable development of Anglo-American antagonism, English imperialism has no opportunity, however much she may desire it, of forming an effective common united front against America with Japan, since her interests are also in serious contradiction to the interests of Japan.

1. Commercial rivalry in Eastern Asia, as well as competition in the sphere of shipping are most acute between Japan and England. A violent struggle is in progress between them, first and foremost in connection with textiles, which play an important rôle, both in Japanese and English exports to China and other Far Eastern markets; but it extends over an enormous host of other most important commodities. In this struggle Japan is carrying on a determined offensive which, especially during the last few years, has meant serious losses for England in trade in Eastern Asia. The position in textiles is well illustrated by the following figures:

China.

Share of England, Japan and the U.S.A. in the import of cotton cloth:

	Japan	England	United States
1913 ...	18.1%	56.3%	7.8%
1929 ...	66.5%	21.8%	0.3%

Indonesia.

Import of cotton cloth (million yards) during the third quarter July-September:

	From England	From Japan
1929 ...	35	70
1930 ...	21	70
1931 ...	11	72

In the third quarter of 1931 as compared with 1929 the entire import fell by 22 per cent.; imports from England by 70 per cent., while the imports from Japan rose by 3 per cent.

British Malay State.

Import of cotton cloth (millions of yards) during the third quarter of the year:



June-September	From England	From Japan
1929 ...	24.7 ...	12.7
1930 ...	8.5 ...	15.4
1931 ...	4.3 ...	15.0

In the third quarter of 1931 as compared with 1929 the entire amount of imports fell by 50 per cent.; imports from England fell by 82 per cent.; imports from Japan rose by 18 per cent.

*British India.*

Average monthly import of cotton cloth (millions of yards):

	From England	From Japan
1925 ...	107 ...	18
1929 ...	106 ...	45
1930 ...	66 ...	32
1931 (9 months)	33 ...	27

In 1925 Japan imported six times less cloth to India than did England. In 1929 Japanese imports amounted to over 40 per cent. of English imports. In 1931, as compared with 1929, English imports fell by 70 per cent., while Japanese fell only by 40 per cent.

The situation on the textile and other markets has only improved for England during the last few months, as a result of the abolition of the gold standard in England and, in the main, as a result of the anti-Japanese boycott which is the outcome of Japanese intervention in China, and which has spread partially to other Far-Eastern markets (Indo-China, Indonesia, Malay and Burma, where the trading network is in the hands of Chinese).

Besides this violent struggle in connection with commerce, England is up against equally violent competition in connection with Japanese shipping. This competition exists not only in connection with Trans-Pacific and Asiatic-European lines, but is especially acute in connection with local coastal shipping, and the inland waters of China.

2. To take another side of the question, in China and the Malay Archipelago, England and Japan are the main competitors as regards capital investments. In the Malay Archipelago and Indonesia, Japanese capital is acquiring the iron deposits and oilfields. In China, in particular, according to the latest sources of information (Blakeslee: "Foreign Affairs," October, 1931), the investments of each of these countries amounts approximately to the same amount of 1,250 million American dollars. English capital is in conflict with Japanese on the Chinese railways, with regard to railway equipment, in the Chinese textile industry (where formally over 40 per cent. and actually over one-half of the industrial equipment belongs to Japan, whereas England only owns four large factories), in port equipment and even in the sphere of credit and money circulation (the struggle

between the English and Japanese banks in China). True, a considerable part of Japanese investments are concentrated in Manchuria, while the main sphere of investment of English capital is South and Central China; but Japan has very large interests in Central and North China as well, and here the rivalry both as regards the export of commodities and export of capital is of a very acute character. It should be mentioned, furthermore, that English capital has very few direct investments in Japan itself.

3. The political contradictions are of no less importance. To Japan, which is thirsting for foreign markets and which was later than England in choosing and dividing the colonies, has been assigned by the conjunction of all her economic and political conditions, the rôle of breaking the territorial *status quo* which had come into being in the Western part of the Pacific Ocean. "Despite the tendencies to conflict among different nations in the Pacific," declared Niccolo Roosevelt, "there is one deciding fact: that it is in the interests of the British Empire or at any rate of her Dominions . . . to maintain the *status quo* throughout this region" (page 11). "Great Britain . . . is the great conservative which is trying to hold on to all it has," says Roosevelt in another place ("The Troublesome Pacific," page 143). Indeed the objects of desire of Japanese imperialism are not only China, where English capital has such strong interests, but the Malay Archipelago, Dutch East Indies, where iron and oil, tin and rubber, attract Japan, as well as all the colossal opportunities of exploiting the native population, not to mention (as a prospect) even British India and the British Dominions in the Pacific. The attitude of the latter is correspondingly anti-Japanese. The programme of Japanese colonial expansion in the end could only be fulfilled at the expense of British imperialism.

In China Anglo-Japanese relations are complicated by the considerable apprehension which British Imperialism has of the Chinese revolution, which is developing in spheres of British influence and which is shaking the foundations of this largest of all colonial empires of the world. The struggle against the Chinese revolution, which is closely connected with the struggle against the Soviet Union, is the link which binds England to Japan and, to a certain extent, unites them. Decrepit England is reckoning upon robust Japan as a standby against revolution in the Far East, and is endeavouring to use her as the gendarme of the Far East. This consideration is of enormous importance as a factor which defines English policy towards Japan, but it is not in a position to remove the antagonism which arises

from the consideration mentioned above of the conflict between the economic and political interests of these two countries. Discussing the problem of regulating the "Chinese question" and of bringing "Chinese anarchy" under control, Sir Frank Fox, in "The Mastery of the Pacific," 1928, declares that one of the means of solving this problem is through Japanese domination in China. He expresses opinions in favour of this domination, but adds that "it is possible that this might, and probably will, give Japan the opportunity, having in view its organisational capacity and national preparedness, of ruling not only in China, but throughout Asia, and then of dictating her will to the rest of the world" (page 288). This price "is too high for England. Japan has in her hands the solution to this problem (Chinese) and the strength required for its solution, but this solution . . . would be a catastrophe for the peace of the world. It would at all events put an end to peace." (Ibid., page 231.)

All that has been said should be sufficient to explain the zig-zag line of policy taken by England towards Japan. The ascendancy of Japanese imperialism took place over a period of twenty years on the basis and with the help of an Anglo-Japanese alliance. As is well-known this alliance came to an end at the Washington Conference, 1921-22, because of pressure on the part of America and the British Dominions. On the heels of this England began to build up a mighty military-naval base at Singapore, which was objectively a menace first and foremost to Japan ("There is only one purpose for which the Singapore base can be used: for war with Japan."—"The Nation," December, 1924), although, obviously, it was directed against the United States. The years that followed saw superficial collaboration between the United States and England, with Japan more or less isolated. As Anglo-American contradictions became more acute, England and Japan once more came closer together and in November, 1928, something in the nature of an agreement to collaborate in China was drawn up. It is possible that in carrying out this agreement British Imperialism occupied an attitude towards Japanese intervention in Manchuria and China, which actually left Japan free to act as she is acting at present. England's refusal to support America, and the acuteness of Anglo-American antagonism, without doubt was an important factor which ensured an extremely cautious policy on the part of America. Moreover, the position adopted by England in the League of Nations, the leading part played by the English representative in the comedy of the despatch to China of a "commission of investiga-

tion" appointed by the League of Nations, and the declarations of the English Foreign Minister, Simon, on the Manchurian question (in which declarations, Simon continually refers to the lack of information, and his inability to speak on the subject until information is received from the League of Nations Commission, etc.) — all this proves that British Imperialism is prepared to sanction the seizure of Manchuria by Japan (in spite even of the losses sustained by English capital as a result of this expansion on the part of Japan, and in particular in consequence of the concession England was forced to make concerning the Mukden-Shanghai huang Railway), and that at the present stage it is refraining from making any active declarations against Japan (even of a diplomatic character) in China proper.

This does not mean, however, any mitigation of the Anglo-Japanese contradictions in the Far East. On the contrary, in the very process of the development of the Japanese offensive, these contradictions must of necessity become more obvious and more acute. "If many are prepared to launch forward with the programme of complete hegemony in China, England, for her part, will find herself in a position where diplomatic measures alone will not be sufficient to defend our interests, for in this case, not only would the policy of 'open doors' be menaced, but also the safety of our trade routes on the Pacific, and also the position of Australia and New Zealand," declared the secretary of the British Joint Chambers of Commerce in China and in Hong-kong — Hull, in his article in the "News-Chronicle," of February 4, 1932.

#### THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN CONFLICT

Japanese-American contradictions in the Pacific, while occupying a position of secondary importance in the whole system of world contradictions and conflicts (after the contradictions between the capitalist countries and the U.S.S.R., and between England and America), have, nevertheless, during the last few years taken on a very real, very acute form, and at the present moment can be quite definitely called a Japanese-American conflict. The essence of these contradictions and the cause of their acute, obvious form does not lie in any competition for trade, which on this side of the triangle is much less developed than on the other two sides. American trade in China and on other markets does not so much compete with Japanese trade as supplement it: a considerable part of American exports to these markets goes on through Japanese brokers and middlemen (according to the "Japan Times" of 6.10.31—as much as 40 per cent.), and a more considerable part goes on through the Japanese banks (in



fact, one-half—according to the same paper), while a large percentage of Japanese exports to China (especially textile) consists of goods, manufactured from American raw materials, or semi-manufactured goods. America supplies steel and machines, not only to Japan, but also to Japanese firms in China (according to the figures of the South Manchuria Railway, the purchases by this railway from America on 31.3.29, amounted to a round sum of 129 million yen as against 193 million yen, representing the round cost of materials bought in Japan). As regards textiles and articles of general consumption, which represent the greater part of Japanese exports to colonial markets and China, American export is not active; on the contrary, Japan exports neither tobacco, nor oil products, nor timber, in which America is strongly interested. In just the same way the American mercantile marine, unlike the Japanese and English, plays no great rôle in Chinese and Eastern-Asiatic transport. Neither do the actual, existing capital investments of America in China compare in any way with the English and Japanese (according to Blakeslee in "Foreign Affairs" of October, 1932, they amount to no more than 250 million dollars), while they are only to a very small extent connected with the Chinese railways, and are not connected in any way with Chinese heavy industry or with the textile industry, i.e., with those spheres which particularly interest Japanese capital. Finally, it should be emphasised that America's trade with Japan herself considerably exceeds her trade with China; America's present trading interests on the Japanese market are more considerable than those on the Chinese market. In fact, during the years 1922-26 Japan swallowed up on an average 5.5 per cent. of America's exports and was responsible for 9.5 per cent. of America's imports, while China's share was correspondingly 2.9 per cent. of the exports and 3.7 per cent. of the imports. It might be mentioned in passing that America occupies the first place also in foreign investments in Japan. According to the latest official statistics from America, the amount of American investment in Japan is 453.5 million American dollars.

If, nevertheless, the Pacific Ocean is at present the arena of almost open conflict between Japan and America, this can be explained by the cardinal fact that the conflict between Japan and America in Eastern Asia is a *conflict of two offensive forces*, of two imperialist Powers, each of which is dissatisfied with the territorial, economic and political alignment of forces which have been created, but each of which is actively fighting to extend its sphere of domina-

tion. Japanese imperialism is importunately knocking at the door of the Eastern world, on the threshold of which Japan is situated; and its immediate task is the colonial seizure of Manchuria and all, or the main part, of China; with these territories as its "place d'armes," it will inevitably extend its advance towards subjecting the whole of Eastern Asia to its domination, and the whole of the extensive Pacific Archipelago, in this way menacing the British Dominions, already half-way along the road to becoming American, and threatening the most important interests of America in South and Central America. The Japanese line of advance comes into conflict, therefore, with the road of development of American imperialism. The latter's road of development, in turn, lies through the same Eastern Asia for which it yearned immediately after it was formed towards the end of the nineties (Spanish-American War), and through China, where for the last ten years or more it has been carrying on an organised, aggressive, counter-offensive against Japanese Imperialism.

The fact that the Japano-American conflict is one between two of the most active, most aggressive imperialist forces, between the very two Powers which are characterised by attempts, each of which excludes the other, to gain the dominating monopoly of all Eastern Asia and the West Pacific Ocean, presupposes that this conflict, which is felt with ever-growing force and particularly clearly in China, will be most acute and irreconcilable. In China, Japan, with its enormous military advantages because of its territorial proximity to China, has been carrying on an open policy of expansion, ever since the beginning of the world war, directed towards the annexation of Manchuria and the partition of the remains of China, in which she will herself take the lion's share. Of course this policy of partition and expansion is common to all the Imperialist Powers, especially, moreover, to the United States, but the latter strongly objects to partition, where Japan is the leader, or the basis of which is an agreement between Japan and England. Having entered the arena of colonial expansion later than the European Powers, American Imperialism was too late to guarantee for herself a suitable base and "spheres of influence" on the Asiatic continent, and this circumstance pre-defined her policy of "the open door," a policy directed against the partition of China in a form which would be disadvantageous for America; and hence America puts forward her own plan of "internationalisation" and "international control" against the plans of the other Powers. During the pre-war period this plan was of a

more defensive nature, seeking to stop the process of territorial expansion and the deepening of spheres of influence of separate European Powers in China; of late, on the basis of a new alignment of forces, much more advantageous for America, this plan has revealed its aggressive, offensive side, as a weapon with which American imperialism is seeking to institute its own dominating monopoly in China.

American capital, which continues its policy of putting forward schemes of this kind on every suitable occasion, at the same time is carrying on, as stated previously, a counter-offensive in China, in particular penetrating into transport and communications (air communications, radio) and making use of the Nanking Government and its Mukden allies as tools in its anti-Japanese policy. The acute relationship between Japan and China in Manchuria during the last few years has been a direct result, and the downright expression of this counter-offensive on the part of American capital: the outward expression of the Japano-Chinese conflict in these parts simply serves to hide up the real essence of the matter, which is the Japano-American conflict. This is quite apart from the importance of the Japano-Chinese conflict in connection with the war for national independence which is being carried on by the Chinese people, and the beginning of which war can already be distinguished in the fighting which recently took place near Shanghai.

The seizure of Manchuria by Japan and the war which is being waged by Japan at present in China proper is exhilarating the Japano-American conflict, which has been steadily developing during the last few years. The very fact of the seizure of Manchuria, which guarantees Japan an important new "place d'armes" on the Continent and an enormous increase in her material resources (raw materials, foodstuffs, fuel, heavy industry), means that Japanese imperialism is now strengthened to a colossal extent and that the prospect of war for the domination of the Pacific is brought much nearer. On the other hand, the seizure of Manchuria could not but be followed by a further Japanese offensive inside China proper, by her demand that the Washington Nine Powers Agreement and the principle embodied therein of the territorial, political and administrative integrity of China should be re-examined (for China—"is not an organised State"), and consequently by Japan's policy of heading straight for the partition of China, or in any case of seizing new "place d'armes" which would safeguard her present seizure of Manchuria in the future. America has always been, and still remains, irreconcilable towards these Japanese aims, which

radically change the relation of forces in the struggle for the domination of the Pacific and threaten in the very near future not only the complete paralysis of any further offensive on the part of America, but more than likely will mean that American capital will have to make a complete exit from China and the whole of Eastern Asia (if it wants to avoid being reduced to the position of a "sleeping partner" financing Japanese expansion, as was shown clearly in the affair of the projected American loan to the South Manchurian Railway Co. in 1927), and that Japan will become a menacing rival in the struggle for domination on a world scale. The Japanese offensive is a corresponding menace to England, in so far as her immediate object in China proper is the valley of the Yangtse river, which for years has been the recognised English sphere of influence. Among the most decisive factors, however, there remains the antagonism between England and America, which hinders effective co-operation between England and America for a joint struggle against Japan, and the fear and hatred of all the imperialists towards the Chinese revolution and the Soviet Union, by force of which world reaction is at present supporting the aggressive activities of Japanese Imperialism. All these factors taken together, together with the support which is being given to Japanese imperialism by France and the specific influence of the universal economic and financial crisis in the capitalist countries, to a certain extent tie the hands of American imperialism in its rôle of main antagonist of Japan, and compels American imperialism to be extremely cautious. Nevertheless, the Memorandums of September 24, 1931 and January 7, 1932, concerning the Manchurian question, and the latest activities of America on the question of the war in Shanghai (Stimson's letter to Senator Borah, and his letter to Senator Bingham), all go to prove that America is neither able nor desirous of reconciling herself to the successes of Japan's acts of aggression, and that the conflict between Japan and America has entered a much more acute stage, a phase which threatens open conflict.

#### THE ROLE OF FRENCH IMPERIALISM

France is not a factor of first-class importance in the situation which has arisen in the Pacific. Her part in the commerce and shipping of the Pacific is insignificant and cannot be compared in any way with the commercial interests of the three leading Pacific Powers. However, she has a most valuable colony in the Pacific (Indo-China), and island possessions in the South Pacific, as well as large interests in Siam and South China. In the past French Imperialism



was engaged in the Far East as the financial support and partner of Tsarist Russia (even earlier, in the middle of the nineteenth century France was in league with the British Empire in the Pacific, and took part with it in two consecutive wars in China). Of recent years the financial power of France has increased relatively. French capital is once more actively seeking means to penetrate into the Far East. In so far as France has insufficient naval forces in the Pacific sphere of world events, she is once more seeking an alliance like the Franco-Russian alliance, which would make it possible for French capital to expand in the Far East with the help of foreign bayonets. It is beyond dispute that Japan is just this sort of ally at the present moment, since France has no commercial rivalry with Japan, nor needs to fear for her colonial possessions (Japan is quite willing to leave Indo-China out of her own plans for expansion). It is characteristic that even before the Washington Conference, the press of the world was full of rumours about a secret alliance between Japan and France. Now Japanese imperialism is acting with the direct political support, and possibly the financial help of French imperialism, which safeguards in particular Japanese interests in the League of Nations, at the same time holding back English interference and counteracting any interference on the part of America. There is not the slightest doubt that the French bourgeoisie, in return for this support, are reckoning to obtain first and foremost the right to seize certain territories in South and South-West China, which for years have been recognised "spheres of interest" in China.

It should be emphasised, however, that the Far East and the Pacific still remain, for France, a mere secondary fighting area. Her main interests lie in Europe, and the secret agreement, which is supposed to exist between France and Japan, and which was apparently formed a short time before the beginning of Japanese intervention, no doubt makes it obligatory upon Japanese Imperialism to fully support France's hegemony in Europe and first and foremost France's intervention against the U.S.S.R., as well as to support France's position at the Disarmament Conference, the essence of which is to give active support to Japanese aggression and to participate in international intervention against China; in the long run the position of French imperialism additionally assists the sharpening of the Japanese-American conflict.

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Up to now we have limited ourselves to an examination of the struggle of the imperialists for

the domination of the Pacific. It must not be forgotten, however, that this struggle is developing on the basis of the cardinal contradiction, the main contradiction of our epoch—the contradiction between the capitalist world as a whole and the U.S.S.R.:

"The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day and all the events of world policy are inevitably concentrated around the one central point—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Russian Soviet Republic, which is grouping around itself; on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers of all lands, on the other hand all the national liberation movements of the colonies and oppressed nationalities, who have become convinced by bitter experience that there is no salvation, except in the victory of the Soviet Power over world imperialism." (Lenin.)

It goes without saying that the Pacific is still of enormous importance, moreover, in the plan of development of this fundamental contradiction of the post-war epoch—the contradiction between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union. It is precisely for this reason that the colonial and semi-colonial world is the Achilles' heel of imperialism; the imperialists fear nothing so much as the alliance and collaboration of the toilers of the Soviet Union, freed from the yoke of capitalist exploitation, and the workers and peasants of the enslaved colonial and semi-colonial countries, fighting for their freedom:

"We want no special propaganda in the East, now that we know that the whole of our system of government is built up on the partnership and fraternal collaboration of the peoples of the most varied nationalities of our land. Every Chinaman, every Egyptian, every Indian who comes to our country and remains for six months can meet with the conviction that our country is the only country which understands the mind of the oppressed peoples."

(Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the XIV. Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

Nowhere, for this reason, are the aggressive anti-Soviet aims of the world bourgeoisie so clearly obvious as in the Far East; nowhere do these aims express themselves in the form of such open, callous acts of anti-Soviet banditism as there.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that in the Pacific are to be found the most distant territories of the Soviet Union, and that in very close proximity to these lands (where, incidentally, intervention of the first period took place consider-

ably later than in the European part of the Soviet Union; in the former before 1922, in Sakhalin before 1925), there are trained White Guard cadres, which are being equipped and made use of by the imperialists and their Chinese agency especially in view of new anti-Soviet undertakings and adventures. It goes without saying that the Far East can never become the main theatre of fighting on the part of the world bourgeoisie against the U.S.S.R., but that the decisive section of their front will always remain in the West, in direct proximity to the vital centres of the Soviet countries. Nevertheless, several of the conditions mentioned make the Soviet Far East in certain respects the most menacing object for the first onslaught against the Soviet Union, for the beginning of the anti-Soviet adventure which will later, according to the idea of its organisers and inspirers, spread along the whole of the borders of the Soviet Union and be converted into a world war between imperialism and the land of Socialism.

All this is sufficient to enable one to understand the degree of importance of the war menace, which is being created for the U.S.S.R. by the present events in the Far East. The

menace of war is formed on the basis not only of the directly aggressive aims of definite circles of the Japanese bourgeoisie towards the Soviet Far East, which abounds in fish, timber, oil and coal, and towards the Chinese Eastern Railway, which belongs to the Soviet Union and is under joint Soviet-Chinese control; the menace of war is to the same extent a result of the sharpening of contradictions among the imperialists, which is inevitable in consequence of Japanese intervention and all that is going on under our eyes at the present moment, which has reached the limit beyond which there is no solution, and the accompaniment to which is a corresponding sharpening of tendencies towards an agreement at the expense of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union stands alone against this menace and against the rapacious policy of the imperialists, with her policy of active struggle for peace and her preparedness to defend herself against all attempts to enroach upon her territory. *"We don't want a single foot of foreign territory, but we shall not give up a single inch of our own territory either, to anyone."* (Stalin, Political Report of the C.C. to the XVI. Congress of the C.P.S.U.).

## COMRADE STALIN'S LETTER AND THE PURGING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC RELICS

Z. SEREBRYANSKY.

### PART I.

AT the Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. held in November, 1928, Comrade Stalin pointed out that the growth of the elements of a new revolutionary upsurge in the countries of capitalism raises the task of "sharpening the struggle against the social-democracy and primarily against its 'left' wing as the social buttress of capitalism." Thus Comrade Stalin explained the necessity of focussing the attention of the Communist Parties upon the slogan of the "purging of the Communist Parties from the social-democratic traditions." In his letter to the editors of the "Proletarian Revolution,"\* Comrade Stalin, unmasking the Trotskyist and the other falsifiers of the history of bolshevism and flaying the rotten liberals who condone them, again raises before the Comintern sections the question of the necessity of sharpening the struggle against the various relics of social-democracy (including left-

radicalism), against the smuggling of hostile ideologies in various forms into the ranks of the Comintern sections.

The presence of social-democratic relics, particularly in the form of left-radicalism, played a tremendous negative rôle in the past as well as in the revolutionary battles of the first period of the general crisis of capitalism (especially during 1918-1920).

The most important cause of the defeats of the proletariat in the revolutionary battles of that period was the treachery of the social-democracy. By acting as the "last anchor of salvation" of the bourgeois society the social-democracy succeeded, through moving to the forefront now the right and now the "left" wing and utilising the influence which it had accumulated during the "peaceful" epoch of the Second International, in putting down the proletarian revolution and saving the capitalist régime.

But the social-democracy succeeded in achieving

\* See No. 20, "Communist International," 1931.



this only because in a number of capitalist countries (Italy, Czechoslovakia, France, etc.) no Communist Parties existed at all, while in a number of others (Germany, for instance) they were very weak.

The youthful Communist Parties formed during the storm and stress of the post-war years found themselves at once confronted with tasks of exceptional importance and difficulty. Despite the heroic struggle against the organised power of the bourgeois State supported by the strong reformist influence over the masses, the youthful Communist Parties did not prove to be capable of breaking the mass influence of the social-democracy and securing the victory of the proletarian revolution. One of the most important causes of this outcome of the revolutionary battles of the first period was the fact that at the time of the revolutionary crisis the proletariat did not yet have real Communist Parties. Over the best elements of the Labour movement of Western Europe still hung the "yoke of the damnable tradition of 'unity'" (as Lenin said); the heavy burden of the numerous social-democratic relics and traditions of the Second International prevented the youthful Communist Parties from successfully fulfilling their historical mission. The social-democratic relics in the ranks of the Communist movement, the weaknesses and mistakes of the young Communist Parties were utilised to the highest degree by the counter-revolution. They facilitated the counter-revolution, particularly the counter-revolutionary social-democracy in its "work" of saving capitalism. The rôle of these social-democratic relics in the revolutionary battles of the first period will become evident even from a most cursory review (restricted to the limits of a short article) of the path travelled by the Communist International during this period.

#### GERMANY.

Take, for instance, the revolutionary movement in modern Germany immediately after the war. The "Spartakusbund," as well as later the youthful Communist Party of Germany, unquestionably have tremendous revolutionary services to their credit. The "Spartakusbund" and the Communist Party of Germany were the only force opposing the bourgeois counter-revolution, the entire gang of Scheidemanns, Noskes, Kautskys, Hilferdings, etc. Even during the years of the war itself the "Spartakusbund" supported by all of its forces the mass revolutionary actions against imperialism (for instance, the strikes in January-February, 1918). In the November revolution of 1918 the "Spartakusbund" advanced the demand for the arming of the proletariat, the disarming of the bourgeoisie, the transfer of the

entire power to the Soviets. During the uprisings of January-March, 1919, the Communist Party of Germany, which had just been formed, courageously fought against Noske, the "bloodhound" of the German bourgeoisie, sacrificing in these battles tens of thousands of revolutionary workers and its finest leaders, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches (Tyschko). But despite the tremendous revolutionary merits of the "Spartakusbund," which should be stressed by all means, it is a fact that at the time of the revolutionary crisis the vanguard of the German proletariat strongly felt all the weaknesses of Luxemburgism, all the menshevist and semi-menshevist mistakes of left-radicalism. "No really revolutionary party," wrote Lenin in his "Letter to the German Communists," "proved to exist among the German workers at the time of the crisis owing to the delay in the split, owing to the pressure of the damnable tradition of 'unity' with the corrupt mercenaries (Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids and Co.)."

The pressure of the damnable tradition of "unity" made itself felt already at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, where there was a very strong sentiment in favour of creating an independent Communist Party only after the masses had left the independent social-democracy. This reflected the worship of spontaneity which marked the entire activity of the "Spartakusbund" and of the young Communist Party of Germany, the non-appreciation of the entire gigantic rôle of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution. The Luxemburgian and left-radical relics further made themselves felt in the entirely mistaken position adopted by the First Congress towards the work in the trade unions (the "Leave the Trade Unions" slogan), in the decision to boycott the elections to the Constituent Assembly (which, to be sure, was adopted against Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht). The menshevist and semi-menshevist mistakes of Luxemburgism and left-radicalism made themselves felt further in the programme of the Constituent Congress of the C.P. of Germany: in the agrarian programme (not to give land to the poor peasants), in the characterisation of terrorism (terrorism as a method of the bourgeois revolutions only), and finally in the organisational questions (the programme of the youthful Communist Party granted full autonomy to the local organisations; the C.C., according to the programme, was to be only a spiritual and political leader). The Luxemburgian mistakes (on the questions of an armed uprising) finally reflected themselves upon the very development of the "Spartakusbund" uprising when, instead of raising a revolt of the Berlin workers (on

January 6th, 1919), instead of taking up a resolute and rapid offensive without permitting the enemy to prepare for a counter-blow, the "Spartakists" remained in the buildings seized by them and thus went over to defensive positions which could (and did) lead only to the crushing of the armed uprising.

If we trace the activity of the Communists in the Bavarian Soviet Republic we will see here as well that the mistakes committed by them were directly due to the influences of various social-democratic traditions.

Even while leading the struggle of the revolutionary workers of Bavaria and heroically repulsing the attacks of the counter-revolution, the Bavarian Communists adhered to the fatalist view that the Soviet Republic was doomed. The social-democratic traditions strikingly reflected themselves in the menshevik-Luxemburgian neglect on the part of the Communists, of the task of winning the peasant reserves of the proletarian revolution (the landlords' estates were not confiscated, the land leased by the small peasants was not handed over to them for permanent use, etc.). How erroneous the conception of the Bavarian Communists concerning their tasks in the village was, may be shown by the letter published by one of the Bavarian Communists, Com. Ar., in the "Communist International" for 1919:

"Any compromise between the Soviet Power and the Bavarian peasantry is hardly achievable," wrote this comrade. "In our opinion the rule of the proletarian dictatorship in Bavaria can be assured only if the socialist revolution is victorious throughout Germany and the victorious proletariat exerts armed pressure upon the reactionary mass of the small landowners of Bavaria."

The anti-bolshevist treatment of the peasant question by the Bavarian Communists led them in reality to the rejection of the struggle for the winning of allies of the proletarian revolution in Bavaria. At the same time the Bavarian Communists failed to take up the independent organisation of the farm labourers, which constitutes the foremost task of the Communist Parties.

The menshevik and semi-menshevik heritage of the Bavarian Communists was further reflected in the underestimation by them of the military-organisational measures (particularly in the "democratic votes" in the Red Army). It reflected itself in the absence in the Bavarian Soviet Republic of true Soviets (the leadership being effected by the loose meeting of 4,000 representatives of factory committees and soldiers' deputies). It was finally reflected in the very fact of the voluntary abandonment of the Soviet

Government by the Communists after the Munich meeting of factory committees, which did not reflect the real sentiments of the masses (the factory committees had been elected during the previous stage in the development of the revolution in Bavaria), made a decision to create a Government of "native Bavarians." The worship of spontaneity, the policy of "automatic" development was strongly felt among the Bavarian Communists as well as among the leaders of the "Spartakusbund." Here, for instance, is the speech of E. Levin of April 15th, 1919, his conception of the essence of a proletarian Government:

"The essence of the proletarian Government consists in that it can do nothing alone, in that it can only appeal to you, make proposals to you; it is you yourself who must act."\*

As we see, here is reflected very strikingly, in a concentrated form, the worship of spontaneity and the non-appreciation of the correct interrelations between the vanguard and the spontaneous movement which represents a characteristic feature of the activity of the entire German Communist Party of that period.

Comrade Stalin gave in the "Questions of Leninism" a brilliant analysis of the essence of the theory and worship of spontaneity:

"The theory of spontaneity," wrote Comrade Stalin, "is a theory of opportunism, a theory of worship of the spontaneity of the Labour movement, a theory of the actual denial of the leading rôle of the vanguard of the working class, of the party of the working class . . . The theory of worship of spontaneity is resolutely opposed to giving the spontaneous movement a conscious, planful character, it is opposed to having the party march in front of the working class, to having the party raise the masses to a level of consciousness, to having the party lead the movement, it believes that the conscious elements of the movement must not interfere with the movement developing in its own way, it believes that the party should only keep its ear on the spontaneous movement and lag in its wake . . ." (Stalin, "Questions of Leninism," 4th Edition, pages 22-23).

It is characteristic that the theory of spontaneity has been and continues to be preached precisely by the parties of the Second International.

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\* It is interesting to note that the Luxemburgist Ernst Meyer who was until his very death one of the most prominent representatives of the conciliationists towards the right wing in the ranks of the C.P. of Germany, greatly lauded the mistakes and weaknesses of the Bavarian Communists which he characterised as classic tactics from a proletarian standpoint.



We shall not deal with the well-known mistakes of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. There can be no doubt that one of the ideological roots of the gravest mistakes committed by the Hungarian Communists during the period of the proletarian dictatorship was Luxemburgism with all of its characteristic features. This was reflected both in the very fact of the amalgamation of the Communist Party with the social-democratic party, as well as in the flagrant mistakes committed on the agrarian question and on a number of other questions.

## POLAND.

Let us now take the Polish Communist Party, its position during the period of the revolutionary crisis in Poland in 1918-19. Despite the merits of the social-democratic party of Poland and Lithuania in the struggle of the Polish proletariat against Czarism, in the struggle against the Polish bourgeoisie, Polish chauvinism and conciliationism (particularly against the social-patriotism of the Polish Socialist Party), the example of the C.P. of Poland strikingly reveals what a negative rôle the relics of Luxemburgism and of the left wing of the P.P.S. played in this party during the revolutionary crisis.

"Long before the organisation of the C.P. of Poland, Luxemburgism," according to a recent decision of the C.C. of the C.P. of Poland, "was the official ideology of the party and, coupled with the fatal menshevist traditions of the left wing of the P.P.S., served as a serious obstacle to the party's transfer to the positions of Leninism. In practice the Luxemburgian doctrine severely affected the fate of the proletarian revolution in post-war imperialist Poland, which oppressed the conquered nationalities. The erroneous Luxemburgian doctrine prevented our party from developing a bolshevist proletarian strategy: from capturing revolutionary allies in the peasant and toiling masses of the enslaved nationalities for the victorious socialist revolution (1918, 1920, 1923)."

*Under the influence of the menshevist traditions of the left wing of the P.P.S. and of the Luxemburgism of the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania, the vanguard of the Polish proletariat did not prove to be equal to its task at the time of the revolutionary crisis.* When the situation demanded action, the organisation of the masses, the organisation of the revolution, the C.P. of Poland concentrated upon propagandist work, and even this work was frequently handled in an abstract manner out of all connection with the concrete state of affairs. At the time of the revolutionary crisis the Polish Communist Party,

as we have seen also in the case of the German Communist Party, adhered to the standpoint of unlimited spontaneity. "The revolution . . . cannot be the work of the party, the revolution must be started by the masses themselves." The sentiment expressed in this statement (taken from the draft political platform worked out by the Communist fraction for the Congress of Soviets of Poland) was exceptionally characteristic of the ideology of the Polish Communist Party during the period of the revolutionary crisis.

Let us take the position of the Polish Party during this period on the agrarian question. Here we meet with the slogan: "No Cutting Down of Forests, no Destruction of the Landlords' Estates," and with the estimation of the peasantry as a "completely reactionary mass."

Let us take the position of the Polish Communist Party of this period on the national question. Here is the "policy" suggested on the national question by the platform of the Constituent Congress of the C.P. of Poland:

"During the period of the international social revolution which destroys the foundation of capitalism, the Polish proletariat rejects all political slogans such as autonomy, independence and self-determination . . . in the international camp of the social revolution the question of boundaries does not exist."

It is not difficult to see what nihilism on such an important question to the Polish proletariat as the national question led to. Already during the years of the war Lenin pointed out that "the necessity of proclaiming and securing freedom for all the oppressed nations (that is, their right to self-determination) will be as vital in the social revolution as it was vital to the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution, for instance, in Germany in 1848 or in Russia in 1905" (see Lenin's theses, "The Social Revolution and the Right of the Nations to Self-Determination"). The Polish Communists neglected these teachings of Lenin.

"The erroneous Luxemburgian position of the S.D.P. and L. on the national question prevented the Polish proletariat from playing the rôle of the leading factor towards the great masses of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, moreover it hampered the struggle of the party against the influence of the petty bourgeois social patriotism of the P.P.S. over the working masses" (from the Resolution of the C.C. of the C.P. of Poland dealing with the overcoming of the ideological heritage of Luxemburgism).

The process of overcoming the relics of Luxemburgism (which began at the second congress of

the C.P. of Poland in 1923), the process of the assimilation by the party of the Leninist policies on the national and peasant questions, became long drawn out. This was largely due to the fact that the leaders of the menshevist left wing of the P.S.P. (Koszeva, Lapinsky) and some comrades from the S.D.P. of Poland and Lithuania (Varsky and Prukhnjak), who revised Luxemburgism, did this on the basis not of Leninist, but of menshevist and Trotskist positions.

The last, Fifth Congress of the C.P. of Poland made it its task to complete the overcoming of the heritage of Luxemburgism and the purging of the party ideology from the menshevist equipment of the left wing of the P.S.P. Comrade Stalin's letter shows to the C.P. of Poland how this vitally necessary work should be carried out from the only correct, Leninist positions.

The menshevist and semi-menshevist relics had a most fatal effect upon the battles of the proletariat of Latvia, Lithuania and Finland as well. But the bolshevist policy on the agrarian question was characteristic both of Soviet Latvia and of the Lithuanian-White Russian Soviet Republic.

#### LATVIA.

This is how this policy was characterised in the Manifesto of the Eighth Congress of the C.P. of Latvia (held in 1931):

"The Soviet Government committed a serious error in 1919 in not permitting the division of the holdings of the landlords and big landowners, in not assuring free use of the land by the small and middle peasants, in not fighting with sufficient determination against the compulsory formation of communes locally. Surrounded on all sides by counter-revolutionary bands under conditions of hunger and ruin, the Soviet Government, owing to these mistakes, failed to unite around the proletariat the poorest peasantry in the struggle against the common enemy. The mistakes of the party were ably utilised by the bourgeoisie which divided the land in its own interests, in the interests of a new enslavement of the toilers . . . These mistakes are now being sharply condemned by the Communist Party itself. The mistakes of 1919 must not and will not be repeated."

During the existence of the Lithuanian-White Russian Soviet Republic the armed forces of the Soviet Power protected the property of the nationalised estates and forests from being "plundered" by the agricultural workers and poor peasants. It is not difficult to see that in this policy of denying the "division of the landlords' land," in this underestimation of the agrarian question as a question of political strategy, was reflected the menshevist denial by the left radicals

of the policy of the union between the working class and peasantry, was reflected the influence of the semi-menshevist scheme of the permanent revolution which they supported. The same applies to the most flagrant mistakes in the national policy committed, for instance, during the period of the existence of the Lithuanian-White Russian Soviet Republic, mistakes testifying to the influence of the complete underestimation of the national question widespread among the left radicals.

#### FINLAND.

Everybody knows of the fatal rôle played in the proletarian revolution of Finland by the social-democratic traditions of those best sections of the Finnish Social Democracy which led the revolutionary struggle of the Finnish worker against the bourgeoisie. These social-democratic traditions were expressed primarily in a tendency to secure the "highest democracy."

Under the influence of these tendencies the "most democratic constitution" worked out by the Council of People's Commissars (during the very heat of the civil war!) did not draw any class distinctions; the leaders of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie were not arrested or were subjected to very slight repressions; in some places during the organisation of the red guard, arms were given to the bourgeoisie as well; Soviets were not organised; while freeing the tenants from the payment of rent and turning the land over to them the Council of People's Commissars left intact about 10,000 big estates as well as the farms of the kulaks (only in case of desertion of the owner was his property handed over to the farm labourers). As a result of this mistaken land policy the independent small peasants and the farm labourers did not obtain anything from the proletarian revolution. Thus, the proletarian revolution did not secure the support of these classes which it could have secured.

Comrade Kuusinen was perfectly right in pointing out that the leaders of the proletarian revolution in Finland participated in the revolution with closed eyes, failing to understand the true sense of the social revolution that was being made.

"In the heat of the most embittered battles," wrote Comrade Kuusinen, "they still continued to talk of a democratic system, of the very same democratic system with which they intimately connected the thought of the elimination of an armed revolutionary clash" (Kuusinen, "Self-Criticism").

The leadership of the Finnish revolution sought to "bridge the gulf" between capitalism and socialism by consolidating the democratic system. The attempts of the leadership of the Finnish



revolution to carry out the proletarian revolution in "peaceful" "democratic" forms, the democratic illusions and prejudices, served as evidence that the leadership of the revolution was addicted ideologically to the traditions of the pre-war Second International. This was not the least factor in the defeat of the Finnish proletariat.

## BULGARIA.

Let us consider now the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The "tesniaks"\* unquestionably have tremendous revolutionary merits before the world labour movement. The long struggle of the "tesniaks" against Bulgarian capitalism, against the "broad" socialists, against the different forms of opportunism, against chauvinism, and for the international education of the masses, is well known. The 30-year revolutionary struggle of the "tesniaks" helped them during the post-war period to rally around themselves the majority of the working class, to make the Bulgarian Communist Party the second party in strength in the country (after the Agricultural Union), and to lead under the banners of the Comintern the great masses of the Bulgarian workers.

At the same time the "tesniak" ideology which had sunk deep roots in the Bulgarian Labour movement reflected itself by a series of negative features in the revolutionary battles of post-war Bulgaria. The party was not the leader and organiser of the revolutionary struggle. The party was only an agitator and propagandist. This was the "tesniak" conception of the rôle of the party "inherited" together with a number of other traditions of the Second International by the Communist Party of Bulgaria during the revolutionary crisis. And it was not by accident, therefore, that when the mass soldier uprising of Vladaisk broke out in 1918 the party underestimated it, regarding it only as a soldiers' "riot" and assuming an attitude of "neutrality" towards it. Under the new conditions when "the contradictions of capitalism have reached the highest degree, when the proletarian revolution has become a question of immediate practice, when the old period of the preparation of the working class for the revolution came up against and grew over into a new period of the direct storm of capitalism" (Stalin), the Bulgarian Communist Party, owing to the influence of the "tesniak" relics and traditions, proved to be unprepared for the fulfilment of its historical mission.

The party assumed an abstract propagandist and passively "tailist" position at the time when the development of the revolutionary movement

demanding action to organise the masses. It was not by accident that the party did not concretely raise the question of the capture of the power by the proletariat. The party did not correctly approach the question of the union of the working class with the bulk of the peasantry and of the toiling masses of the oppressed nations, the party did not clearly realise the tasks of the winning by the proletariat of the hegemony in this union.

It was not by accident that the opportunist view was adopted by the C.C. of the Bulgarian C.P. (for instance, in 1920), that the revolution in Bulgaria has no internal forces, as it "depends mainly upon foreign conditions." It was maintained that the victory of the Bulgarian proletariat was possible only after the proletariat of the advanced and developed countries comes out victorious. The fatal mistake of the Bulgarian Communist Party during the fascist coup of Zankov in 1923 when the Bulgarian Communist Party adopted an attitude of "neutrality" was also not accidental (this decision of the Communist Party was communicated to Plevna by the Government wire and circulated with the permission of the Zankov Government, as it was fully in the interests of the fascist Government).

## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA.

We shall now turn to the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party. Here, too, we see the fatal rôle of the relics of the so-called "Marxian-left," of the menshevist and semi-menshevist relics in the development and outcome of the revolutionary battles of the proletariat of Czecho-Slovakia.

"Every national policy," wrote the "Reichsberg Vorwärts" of March 19th, 1921, "is superfluous. Every national policy, every 'sympathy' to the oppressed nationalities, every measure aimed at 'eliminating' or 'mitigating' the national oppression represents a betrayal of the cause of the proletarian revolution."

Such are the views given currency in the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia on the national question. In the case of one of the leaders of the "Marxian-left" the theses that the "national struggle in the present epoch interferes with the development of the class struggle" was oddly combined with the recognition of Masaryk's imperialist theory of the national "unity" of the Czechs and Slovaks.

Similar menshevist views existed in the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia on the question of the rôle of the party as well. In the Communist Party the view was widespread that the party must not take the initiative in the fighting inasmuch as it was itself within the power of the spontaneous movement, views which could, in practice, transform the party only into a "recorder" of the events instead of a revolutionary vanguard of the prole-

\* Meaning "Narrow" in the sense of orthodox Socialists.

ariat. This is how it actually happened that the "Marxian-left" and subsequently the C.P. of Czechoslovakia followed in the wake of the mass movement (for instance, during the biggest revolutionary action of the working class of Czechoslovakia, the December strike of 1920). The theory of spontaneity, the effect of which can be traced in a series of revolutionary actions thus makes itself felt very painfully here as well.

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

The C.P. of Great Britain, from its very inception, found itself confronted with the task of overcoming the opportunist, sectarian ideological heritage received from the former socialist organisations. It was not by accident that the very first Congress of the C.P. of Great Britain (in 1920) had to deal with two major questions: the question of affiliation to the Labour Party and of participation in the bourgeois Parliament. Only with the aid of the C.I. and of Comrade Lenin did the C.P. of Great Britain cure itself of the "infantile sickness of leftism" and learn to understand that "the revolutionary class, for the realisation of its task, must be able to master all forms or aspects of the social activity without the least exception" (Lenin, volume xxv., page 232).

#### U.S.A.

Like the Communist Party of Great Britain, the C.P. of the United States (or to be more exact the C.P. and the C.L.P.) carried the opportunist sectarian load (including De Leonism) for a fairly long time. Refusal to work in the old reformist trade unions, and neglect of the mass work and the struggle for partial demands, acted as the greatest hindrances to the development of the party and inevitably led it to self-isolation from the mass struggle.

#### FRANCE.

The influence of the social-democratic traditions was felt with special acuteness by the Communist Party of France.

Together with such centrist elements as Favre, Verfeuille, Souvarin, etc., a good many social-democratic, centrist and anarcho-syndicalist traditions passed over into the C.P. of France after the Tours Congress (December, 1920). These elements dragged the party back, into the "old home" of the Second International, to Longuet, Boncour, P. Faure, Renaudel. On the other hand, a section of the anarcho-syndicalists who joined the French Communist Party continued to advocate the opportunist positions of syndicalism, which is "above the party" and "sufficient for everything and unto itself." Even many of the best syndicalists who were prepared to break with the anarcho-syndicalist conceptions of the "purely

economic revolution" and of "all-embracing syndicalism," nevertheless defended the theory of the "independent trade union movement."

The absence of the Communist Party at the time of the post-war revolutionary upsurge resulted in the French proletariat finding itself without a leading revolutionary staff to organise and direct the movement. On the other hand, the opportunist-sectarian theory of "non-interference" with the trade union movement, which was preached, for instance, by such organisations as the "Committee of the Third International," led to the best elements of the French proletariat isolating themselves during the period of the powerful sweep of the strike movement (1919-1920) from the mass movement, virtually passing by it, and limiting their activity to propaganda alone. The C.P. of France was destined to go through the complex and difficult process of bolshevisation in order to purge itself of the social-democratic and anarcho-syndicalist elements which did not break with their past but on the contrary sought to smuggle their old opportunist rubbish into the Communist Party.

Such, very briefly, is the rôle of the different social-democratic relics in the activity of the Communist Party during the past revolutionary battles. As we have seen, these relics prevented the young sections of the Comintern from adopting a bolshevist strategy and served as one of the most important causes of the defeats of the proletariat.

That is why the fact that some authors advanced the thesis in our literature to the effect that "the theoretical defects and shortcomings of the left-radicals . . . were easily overcome under the influence of the experience of the October revolution" is extremely harmful. This is how Comrade Radek, for instance, wrote in "The German Revolution" (in 1923).

As we have seen, the dead-weight of traditions and relics of the Second International have been overcome with much less ease, in a number of our Communist Parties, than Comrade Radek imagines.

\* \* \*

Since the revolutionary battles of the first period a good deal of time has elapsed. Our parties utilised this time for the bolshevisation, for the consolidation of their ranks.

*The Communist International grew, hardened and strengthened in a merciless struggle against the social-democracy in all of its manifestations and in a determined fight on two fronts, against right and "left" opportunism in its own ranks, against all sorts of distortions of Marxism-Leninism. At the time of the creation of the Comintern many left social-democratic elements*



joined it. But the Comintern admitted them only after bolshevism (which subjected their mistakes, their erroneous views, their weaknesses and prejudices to merciless criticism) put before them the condition of overcoming the social-democratic relics and traditions (recall, for instance, the famous "21 conditions" of admission to the Comintern). The Comintern was created not on the basis of a combination of bolshevism with left-radicalism, but solely on the basis of bolshevism which alone represented and represents completely consistent revolutionary Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, revolutionary proletarian internationalism. Against the social-democratic relics, the Communist International has been stubbornly fighting from the very moment of its foundation.

But can it be said that now these social-democratic relics no longer play any rôle? Of course, it would be completely wrong to say this. And the importance of Comrade Stalin's letter to the sections of the Communist International consists, among other things, precisely in that at the time of the preparation of the proletariat for decisive battles it is necessary to strengthen the blow at all the open and disguised forms of penetration of social-democratic elements into the ranks of the sections of the Comintern. It is necessary to strengthen the blow against every form of right and "left" social-democratic deviation and relic, against the damnable traditions of the Second International which still continue to survive, in a certain measure, in the ranks of the Communist movement.

From these relics and traditions of the Second International, from the weaknesses and mistakes of the left radicals, the renegades of the Comintern, such as the Brandlerists, for instance, made a "bridge" for themselves to social-fascism. Exploiting the weaknesses and mistakes of Luxemburgism, they spoke and still speak of the "backwardness" and "specifically Russian character" of Leninism, of its "peculiarity" and "unsuitability" to the conditions of developed countries; of "West-European Communism" which stands "above" Russian bolshevism. Like Thalheimer, they refer to the C.P. of the Soviet Union as the "fated party of the Comintern," etc., etc.\*

The arguments of the renegades who have

been cast outside the Comintern, regarding the "specifically Russian" character of bolshevism have long been refuted by Lenin and Stalin.

"Is not Leninism a generalisation of the experience of the revolutionary movement of all countries?" wrote Comrade Stalin ("Principles of Leninism," 4th edition, page 247). "Are not the principles of the theory and tactics of Leninism suitable, obligatory to the proletarian parties of all countries? Was not Lenin right in saying that 'bolshevism is fit as an example of tactics to all'? (see volume xxiii., page 386). Was Lenin wrong in speaking of the 'international importance' of the Soviet Power and of the principles of bolshevist theory and tactics?" (see volume xxv., pages 171-172).

In its turn, counter-revolutionary Trotskism, which has developed into the vanguard of the international bourgeoisie, being unable at present to appear under the discredited counter-revolutionary banner of Trotsky, attempts to drag in the old Trotskist rubbish, under the flag of the idealisation of Luxemburgism, about the "re-arming" of bolshevism, about "bolshevism having come upon the international arena only after the war," about the "underestimation" by Lenin and the bolsheviks of the opportunism of the centre before the war, about their "underestimation" of the revolutionary essence of the left radicals, etc., etc.

The Trotskist smugglers are seeking to split Leninism into two parts by all of these attempts: pre-war Leninism which was "unfit," "old" Leninism, and post-war Leninism, which "re-armed" itself with the aid of Trotsky.

Comrade Stalin has long exposed the essence of these Trotskist attempts to smuggle in under the flag of history the "little ideas" of counter-revolutionary Trotskism. By the theory of dissecting Leninism into two parts, Trotskism seeks to discredit Leninism as an "integral theory which originated in 1903, underwent the trials of three revolutions and is now marching forward as the battle flag of the whole world proletariat" (Stalin, "On the Opposition," page 122).\*

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"He who looks back from the present position of the Comintern sees also the correct and valuable elements which were contained in Rosa Luxemburg's warning against the hasty foundation of the Comintern. They consisted in the prediction that the Comintern in which there was not a single mature and independent party, in addition to the Russian Party, but were only small immature groups and tendencies with the exception of the Spartakusbund . . . that in such an International the tremendous weight of the Russian Party would crush all the other parties and retard and harm its development, that the International would gain a specific Russian imprint."

\* Russian.

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\* Here is a characteristic example of how the Brandlerite renegades defend the mistakes of Rosa Luxemburg and make them their banner. In No. 10 of the Brandlerist organ, "Gegen den Strom" (March 9, 1929), A. Thalheimer writes the following on the resistance offered to the organisation of the Communist International by the Spartakusbund.

Therefore, Comrade Stalin pointed out in the same book, "the theory of dissecting Leninism into two parts is a theory of destroying Leninism, a theory of supplanting Leninism by Trotskism."

It is quite clear that all of these positions of the right and "left" renegades of the Comintern represent an attempt to attack the line of the C.P.S.U. and of the Comintern under the flag of the idealisation of the social-democratic traditions and relics, to discredit and besmirch the leading rôle of the C.P.S.U. in the world Communist movement and the rôle of the U.S.S.R. as the lever and base of the world proletarian revolution. Thus, are the right and "left" renegades of Communism executing the "social order" given to them by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

As we see, the Trotskists and the Brandlerites not only assimilated all of the negative features from the Luxemburg heritage, but "enriched" them in turn, introducing into them their counter-revolutionary "tribute." The Brandlerites and the Trotskists have been cast out of the ranks of the Communist International and are now on the other side of the barricade.

However, in the ranks of the modern Communist movement we still meet with the influence of many social-democratic relics, particularly that of the Luxemburgian relics. Take, for instance, the "theory of spontaneity." We still meet in the practices of the Communist Parties all too often a policy of relying upon the spontaneous development of the movement, an underestimation of the fact that "the party cannot be a real party if it is to limit itself to recording what the mass of the working class is experiencing and thinking, if it is to follow in the wake of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertia and political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat, if it is unable to raise the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat" (Stalin). "The party," pointed out Comrade Stalin, "must be ahead of the working class, it must see further than the working class, it must lead the proletariat behind it rather than plod along in the

wake of spontaneity" (Stalin, "Questions of Leninism," pages 83-84).

Many sections of the Comintern still frequently do not correspond to these most important conditions laid down by the leader of the Communist International, Comrade Stalin. It was not by accident that the last (Eleventh) Plenum of the E.C.C.I., in the section of the theses\* devoted to the "weaknesses and shortcomings in the work of the majority of the sections of the Communist International," emphasised in the first place the "tailism" in regard to a number of important revolutionary movements, unemployed actions, the peasant movement, the backwardness in the mobilisation of the masses in the struggle for the every-day needs.

It is quite obvious that very frequently the ideological root of this passiveness, backwardness and tailism consists of the relics of the "theory of spontaneity" which the left radicals worshipped. The Luxemburgian relics make themselves sharply felt in the question of the allies of the proletariat also, in the weakness of the work of a number of sections of the Comintern in the field of the national-colonial question, in the weakness of the work in the village. Finally, we still frequently meet with different varieties of the theory of the "automatic collapse of capitalism," a theory which Rosa Luxemburg had attempted to develop but which now serves as the banner of the "left" social-democratic theoreticians. It is quite obvious that this "theory of the automatic collapse of capitalism" only serves to justify the opportunist passiveness and the lagging of the subjective factor as represented by the Communist Parties, behind the objectively favourable situation. Examples of the effect of the social-democratic relics (in different forms) may be found in every section of the Comintern. We shall briefly touch upon these relics as affecting the Communist Party of France alone, in which the process of bolshevisation developed under particularly complicated and difficult conditions.

(To be concluded.)

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\* Modern Books. 3d.

## CORRECTION.

Owing to a translation error the sentence beginning "Parliamentary illusions" (page 185, line 21, No. 6) in the speech of D. Z. Manuilsky reads "Parliamentary illusions are SOWN here much more rapidly than in England." This sentence should read: "Parliamentary illusions will *therefore be destroyed* much more rapidly in these countries than in England."

With apologies, EDITOR.



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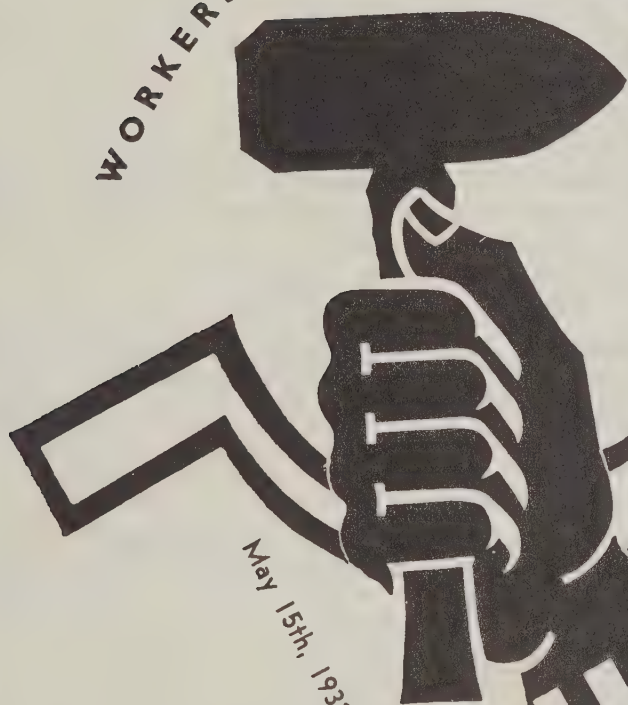
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# COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

FIFTEEN CENTS  
CONTENTS  
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# CONTENTS

Number - - 8-9

SPECIAL EDITION  
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## 1. THE BOLSHEVIZATION OF C. P.'s IN THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES BY OVERCOMING SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS (Part I.)

*O. Piatnitsky. The first part of a report, giving a detailed comparison of the organizational development and methods of the Bolshevik Party with the post-war Communist Parties of advanced capitalist countries, and drawing conclusions. Invaluable for all organizers.* (See page 251)

## 2. (Part II.)

*The concluding portion of a report to teachers at the International Party Schools; dealing with fractions, the Press, agitation, tactics, the United Front, legal and illegal work, factory work. Invaluable for all active militants.* (See page 262)

## 3. THE VII CONGRESS OF THE C. P. OF FRANCE

*The results of the activity of the C. P. of France over the last three years, in the light of the present French economic situation; and the debates and decisions of the Congress.* (See page 273)

## 4. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE POLICY OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN INDIA

*Explodes the sedulous British imperialist propaganda of economic revival in India, showing the real basis of India's export of gold—impoverishment. Shows British imperialist policy of compromise, with the Indian bourgeoisie, and exposes its agents in the labor movement.* (See page 279)

## 5. HINDRANCES TO FACTORY WORK IN ENGLAND

*Records the subjective difficulties hindering this all-important work, which can and must be eliminated at once.* (See page 287)

## 6. MICHAEL NIKOLAEVICH POKROVSKY (Obituary.)

(See page 294)



Due to the seizure by joint action of the United States Customs Service and State Department of Numbers 4-5, 6 and 7 of the *Communist International*, upon which release was later secured, there has been delay in receiving subsequent numbers. As a result, Numbers 8, 9, 10 and 11-12 have thus far not appeared in the United States. We are therefore printing selected articles from the above issues in two special issues for the United States, which appear as Numbers 8-9 and 10-11-12 respectively.

## THE BOLSHEVISATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES BY MEANS OF OVERCOMING THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS\*

O. PIATNITSKY.

THE XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. recorded the fact that the sections of the Comintern in the capitalist countries lag behind the rise of the revolutionary labour and peasant movement.

Since the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. a year has passed, a period sufficient for drawing some conclusions. Has this lag been liquidated?

The last three quarters of 1931 and the first quarter of 1932 brought a sharp deterioration of the conditions of the toiling masses, of the workers and of the poor and middle peasant masses. The Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties and the reformist trade union which still have a large following among the workers and employees, have long completely deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie and have been daily betraying the interests of the working class. During this period the revolutionary labour and peasant movement did not subside while in some countries (Spain, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, China, Japan, India, America, France) it even continued on the up-grade, yet in the principal imperialist countries (England, America, Germany, France) the Communist Parties are just as backward as they were before the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. As the last elections in Germany and France have shown, the Communist Parties of these countries have not only failed to break the hold of the Social-Democratic Party and of the reformists upon the great working masses, but have even lost votes compared with the

parliamentary elections of 1928 and 1930. Each country has its objective causes to explain this lag. This does not mean, however, that the lag is not due in a very large measure to the subjective factor—the failure to utilise the discontent of the great masses of the toilers with the lowering of the living standards, with unemployment, starvation, the burden of taxation, the actions of the Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties and reformist trade unions.

How are we to explain this failure to capture the working masses from the Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties and the reformist trade unions, and to consolidate, organise and keep those workers who joined the Communist Parties and revolutionary trade union movements of the capitalist countries.

It is due mainly to the Social-Democratic and reformist traditions, prevailing in every field of party and trade union work, which are deeply-rooted in the Communist Parties, red trade unions and trade union oppositions.

By contrasting the Bolshevik and the Social-Democratic methods of mass work, organisational forms, estimations of the current situation and tactics we shall show below that the sections of the Comintern in the capitalist countries took over and preserved a good deal of the practices of the Social-Democratic Parties.

*The Bolsheviks and Reformism, Opportunism and the adaptibility of the Socialist Parties of the West during the Epoch of the Pre-War Second International.*

Czarist Russia was dominated by an autocracy,

\*This article comprises the revised stenographic record of a report delivered at the conference of teachers of Party structure of the International Communist Universities.

by a feudal-landlord clique. Not only the position of the workers, but also that of the peasants was unbearable. The entire petty bourgeoisie (and even the liberal bourgeoisie) were discontented with the autocracy. (This, by the way, explains the extensive participation of the intelligentsia and students in the revolutionary movement against the autocracy in 1905.) Russia, as the events of 1905 proved, was headed for a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Comrade Lenin wrote in March, 1905, on this question as follows: "The objective course of events has confronted the Russian proletariat precisely with the task of a democratic-bourgeois revolution . . . The same task confronts the whole nation, i.e., the entire mass of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; without such a revolution any more or less extensive development of an independent class organisation aiming at a Socialist revolution is unthinkable." ("The Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry," Volume VI, Page 136, First Edition.)

This period of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions had already been passed in the 90's by the principal countries abroad. The bourgeois-democratic revolutions there were made, under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, by the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie with no revolutionary labour parties in existence.

The Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties which already existed as mass parties in the principal countries abroad in the 90's, adapted themselves to the existing regimes and legislations. Before the world war the political struggle conducted by the Social-Democratic Parties was a struggle for reforms in the field of social legislation and for universal suffrage, the struggle itself being carried on chiefly by means of the ballot.

While they did not reject in words the ultimate goal of the struggle of the proletariat, Socialism, in reality they did nothing of a serious and practical character to prepare for and wage the revolutionary battles, to train for this purpose the necessary cadres, to give the party organisations a revolutionary policy, to break through the bourgeois legality in the process of the struggle, etc. The entire policy of the Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties resolved itself into securing through universal, equal suffrage, etc., a parliamentary majority, in order then to "inaugurate Socialism." Attempts at such adaptation, which met with resolute resistance on the part of the illegal Bolshevik Party, found an expression in Russia as well as among the Menshevik liquidators (and Trotsky) who proclaimed the Stolypin regime a bourgeois one and sought to adjust themselves to it by taking up legal activities, and fighting for reforms after the model of the West-

European Socialist Parties. The Mensheviks ignored the fact that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution remained unsolved after the 1905 revolution as well.

The rôle of the trade unions in the West was deliberately restricted to that of a subsidiary organisation of the great working masses protecting nothing but the daily, even if important, economic interests of the working class without pursuing the aim of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. They left the entire field of "pure" politics to the political party. They had no other aims except to negotiate collective agreements and conduct economic strikes. Even more reformist was the rôle of the workers' co-operatives. The trade unions sometimes found themselves in conflict even with the Social-Democratic Parties on the question of the calling of political strikes and revolutionary holidays, while the co-operatives clashed with the trade unions seeking aid from the workers' co-operatives during economic strikes. It was for this reason that the foreign Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties regarded Bernstein's revision of the fundamental principles of Marxism so tolerantly, without even thinking of a split, despite the fact that certain Social-Democratic Parties passed resolutions against the opportunists, revisionists and reformists, for the whole work of the Social-Democratic Parties and of the Labour organisations led by them, was permeated in practice with Bernsteinism.

The situation in Czarist Russia was quite different. During the 90's there existed in every city, particularly in the industrial centres of the former Russia Empire, not only groups of populists but also groups and organisations of Social-Democrats. From their very inception there existed among them opposing tendencies: "Economists," Bundists, with their demand for cultural-national autonomy, who adhered to the "Economists," Revolutionary Social-Democrats, ordinary Social-Democrats — the swamp which swung both ways. The Social-Democratic newspaper, "Iskra," which began to be published by the revolutionary Social-democrats headed by Comrade Lenin, opened from the very outset a struggle against all deviations from Marxism in general, and against "Economism" in particular.

Lenin and the revolutionary "Iskrist" who gained a majority at the second congress of the Party (the Bolsheviks) continued in their subsequent activities to follow the revolutionary Social-Democratic line of the old "Iskra." In a tireless struggle against Menshevism, liquidationism, recallism,\* Trotskism, the right deviation,

\*Otsovism.—Ed.



opportunism in practice, sectarianism, conciliationism within the Party, and all deviations from the Party line, in the name of the capture, maintenance and consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a heroic revolutionary struggle against the Czarist autocracy, in a relentless struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie which was prepared to compromise with the Czarist autocracy and sought to deflect the Russian revolution on to the "Prussian road," in a struggle against the entire capitalist system, at all the stages of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin, forged the Bolshevik strategy and tactics, the methods of mass work, the organisational principles and the Bolshevik Party structure. *The Bolsheviks in Russia, unlike the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries, did not have to overcome the old, deep-rooted opportunist and reformist traditions in the policy, organisation and methods of their work.* Besides, the Bolsheviks carefully studied and learned the lessons of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions, the rôle of the liberal bourgeoisie in them, rejected the weak points of the theory, programme and practice of the Western Social-Democratic Parties and mass labour organisations and absorbed the good elements.

*What conditions prevailed in Czarist Russia and abroad when the Bolshevik Party began to be organised in Russia and the Social-Democratic Parties in the West.*

Up to 1905 there were no legal parties in Czarist Russia. Even the liberal bourgeoisie were forced to publish their printed party organ, "Emancipation," abroad (in Stuttgart, Germany). In the other countries, on the contrary, there existed practically throughout the history of the mass labour movement (with some rare and temporary exceptions such as the anti-Socialist law in Germany), freedom for the Social-Democratic Parties not only before, but even during the war. In the decisive capitalist countries (France, Germany, England, America, Czecho-Slovakia and many other countries) the Communist Parties exist more or less legally. It is these parties that we shall deal with. It is these parties that I will contrast and compare with the Bolshevik Party of former Czarist Russia.

Up to 1905 Russia had no legal mass trade unions, and after 1905 when they were created by the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) they eked out a miserable existence until 1912. The Mensheviks endeavoured to give the T.U.'s they had created functions and a character analogous to that of T.U.'s in Western Europe. If they did not succeed in this, it was only thanks

to the tireless struggle of the Bolsheviks against these efforts inside the workers' mass organisations. From the outbreak of the war until the February Revolution the T.U.'s were either closed or placed in such police conditions as to be unable to function normally. Abroad, in the principal countries (England, America, Italy) trade unions were created before the organisation of the Social-Democratic Parties, while the trade union movement of France was permeated by syndicalism which ignored the political parties. At the same time, in some countries (England, Belgium, Sweden, etc.) the trade unions were collectively affiliated to the Labour Parties so that it may be said that in a certain measure these Parties were formed out of the trade unions. Even of Germany it may be said that the trade union movement is older than the independent political Labour Parties. In the 60's the trade unions in various Labour centres (such as the unions of compositors, cigar makers in Berlin, etc.) originated and functioned before the workers' educational societies which gave rise to the two Labour Parties of Germany, the Lassalians and the Eisenachers (which subsequently constituted the German Social-Democratic Party), broke away from their bourgeois navel cord, the bourgeois progressive party. The workers' strikes took place without the leadership of political parties, especially during the latter half of the 60's.

It goes without saying that both individual Socialists and, particularly, the First International as a whole, which was led by Marx and Engels, exercised a very great influence over the existing trade unions and the strikes of that time. But the fact is that even in Germany of that epoch the political parties did not organise strikes or lead the trade unions. Later, with the passing of the anti-Socialist law, the German trade unions suffered less than the political Social-Democratic Party. The powerful development of capitalism strengthened the trade union movement despite the persecutions. Under the conditions of the time the trade unions could not but strengthen their independence. The Parliamentary Social-Democratic fraction which assumed the functions of the General Committee did not direct the economic struggle of the proletariat, restricting itself to Parliamentary-political problems. Thus, from the very beginning of the existence of the Social-Democratic Party, and of the trade union organisations, the latter displayed tendencies towards independence. In Czarist Russia, on the contrary, the Party organisations of the Bolsheviks led the entire struggle, both economic and political. Abroad the functions of the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Parties were divided, the Parties engaging in pure politics

while the trade unions conducted the economic struggle. It must be emphasised that some Communist Parties in capitalist countries do not even now consider it their duty to lead the economic struggle, but entrust it completely to the trade union opposition or the red trade unions. Thus, the Communist Parties have taken over these Social-Democratic traditions. In those countries where the Communist Parties organise strikes and attend to the trade union movement we observe cases of a sectarian attitude towards it. It is only with great difficulty that the Communist Parties succeed in ridding themselves of this attitude.

*The Bolshevik and the Social-Democratic Forms of Party Organisation.*

In Czarist Russia there were no elections or election campaigns up to 1905. If the municipal councils (the *Zemstvos*) were elected bodies, neither the peasants nor the workers participated in the elections. They were disfranchised. After 1905 when the State Duma was created the workers were given special voting conditions, labour "curias"\* being created and the workers voting in the factories and mills.

The illegal condition of all the parties in Czarist Russia up to 1905, the absence of elections and (and this is of chief importance) the correct attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the structure of the Party—they recruited into the Party the workers of the factories, created political and self-educated circles from among the factory workers — such were the special forms of the Bolshevik Party in Czarist Russia. The illegal condition of the Bolshevik Party as per the reasons given prompted it to establish Party groups in the factories where it was easier and more convenient to work. The Party structure of the Bolsheviks thus began with the factories, and this yielded excellent results both during the years of the reaction, after the February revolution, and particularly during the October Revolution of 1917, the civil war and the great construction of Socialism. During the reaction following upon 1908 when in places the local party committees and the party leadership (the C.C.) were broken up there still remained in the factories and mills a certain base, small party cells which continued the work. After the February Revolution when the elections were held to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies the factories and mills also served as the basis for the elections. It is noteworthy that the elections to the municipal and district councils and the Constituent Assembly, which were based not upon occupational but upon territorial principles, were also carried out by the Bolshevik Party very successfully after the

February and October Revolutions, despite the fact that the party had no territorial organisations, and its agitation was concentrated in the factories and barracks. The cells and the district and city committees conducted the election campaign without creating special territorial organisations for the purpose. During all periods the lower party organisations of the Bolsheviks existed at the place of work rather than at the place of residence.

Abroad the situation was entirely different. There elections were held not in the factories but in the election districts, in the places where the voters lived. The main task pursued by the Socialist Parties was to gain electoral victories, to fight by means of the ballot, and the Party organisation was therefore built along residential lines which made it easier to organise the Party members for the election campaign in the respective election districts.

It cannot be said, however, that the Social-Democratic Parties were not connected with the factories and mills. They kept in contact with them through the trade unions which they headed through their members. Although the trade unions were not built along factory lines they still had their representatives and financial secretaries in the factories, and since all of these financial secretaries and trade union delegates were mostly Social-Democrats, the Social-Democratic Parties, through these trade union delegates and through the trade unions, were connected with the factories. When the Communist Parties appeared (and they appeared in some countries as a result of secessions and withdrawals from the Social-Democratic Party, while in others, such as Czecho-Slovakia and France, the majority of the Social-Democratic Party decided to join the Communist International, the remaining minorities constituting themselves into Social-Democratic Parties), they built their organisations exactly after the model of the Social-Democrats. And this despite the fact that the Communist Parties, from the very moment of their inception, aimed at an entirely different objective to that of the Social-Democratic Parties. They made it their object to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish the power of the proletariat, while the international Social-Democracy during the war, supported its bourgeoisie and after the war developed into the chief social support of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the Communist Parties constructed their organisations along the same lines as the Social-Democrats, on the basis of election constituencies, along residential lines. In addition it must be said that they did not have their trade union organisations, and where they created their own trade unions, the latter did not,

\*Polling Stations.



and do not, to this day, have firm organisational connections with the factories. Thus, the organisations of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries were built *without permanent organisational connections with the factories*. Such is the principal defect in the structure of the Communist Parties which must be clearly and sharply stressed by the teacher in the universities. The Communist Parties have different tasks yet they built their organisations along the same lines as the Social-Democratic Parties. While the Social-Democrats are connected with the factories through the trade unions, the Communist Parties do not have even such connections with the factories; this is true of even those Communist Parties which strongly influence the red trade unions (the Communist Parties of Czechoslovakia and France). The Communist Parties immediately after their formation took over the organisational forms of the Social-Democratic Parties, because they did not know of, they were not familiar with, the peculiar Bolshevik forms and methods of Party structure. However, during the war, and immediately after it, the factory workers in many countries appointed revolutionary representatives; in Germany these representatives played an important part in the big strikes conducted during the war, elected factory committees (such as the shop stewards in England) and even sent representatives to Soviets. In this way they were able to realise the advantages of organising at their place of work compared with organisation along territorial lines. But after the revolutionary storm subsided, the Social-Democratic traditions gained the upper hand over the forms of organisation approaching the Bolshevik forms of work in the factories. This is the main reason why the Communist Parties, especially the middle and lower Party and revolutionary trade union organisations and cadres which are actually carrying out most of the Party and revolutionary work, repeated at that time the nearly-Bolshevik methods of work in the factories and are now resisting the adoption of these methods despite the fact that their superiority to the Social-Democratic methods has already been proven. In this, however, they do not meet with sufficient opposition on the part of the Party leadership.

That the absence of Party organisations in the factories strongly affects the work of the Communist Parties is shown by such an example, for instance, as that of Germany, in 1923, when the Party failed to utilise the revolutionary situation for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, this being due in no small degree not only to the absence of a truly revolutionary leadership, but also to the absence of extensive and firm connections with

the workers in the factories. In 1923, the German Social-Democracy was seriously weakened by unbelievable desertions. The reformist trade unions in 1922 had nine million members (7,895,065 in the all-German Federation of Trade Unions and the rest in the clerical workers' unions) of whom only three million remained in 1923. The apparatus of the reformist trade unions was demoralised, it had no money to pay its officials. The German Communist Party could then have captured power had it been headed by a revolutionary leadership, had it conducted a real struggle against the Social-Democratic Party and the reformists, had it been strongly connected with the factories, had it been familiar with the interests of the factory workers, had it mobilised them, applying the revolutionary united front policy in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat instead of the Brandlerist united front with the "left" Saxon Social-democrats and with Zeigner's Government. The meeting called by the Brandlerist opportunist leadership in 1923 to decide the question of whether they were to co-operate or not consisted mainly of Party officials, co-operative workers and trade union officials, among whom there were a good many opportunists of the type of Brandler, Thalheimer and Walcher who were not connected with the masses, who did not know what the working masses were thinking and interested in, and it was this meeting which decided not to act.

#### *Factory Cells and Street Cells.*

In Czarist Russia the cells (or the individual Bolsheviks in the factories and mills in which no Party cells existed) utilised all the grievances in the factories; the gruffness of the foremen, the deductions from wages, fines, the failure to provide medical aid in accidents, etc., for oral agitation at the bench, through leaflets, meetings at the factory gates or in the factory yards, and separate meetings of the more class conscious and revolutionary workers. The Bolsheviks always showed the connection between the maltreatment in the factories, and the rule of the autocracy, for the workers felt the effects of the Czarist whips on their own backs, and jail and exile for their protests and strikes against the employers. At the same time the autocracy was connected up in the agitation of the Party cells with the capitalist system, so that at the very beginning of the development of the Labour Movement the Bolsheviks established a connection between the economic struggle and the political. When the sentiments of the workers in the factories became favourable towards a strike, the Bolshevik cells immediately placed themselves in the leadership. The strikes in single shops spread to all departments, a strike in a single factory spread to all

the other factories, and the strikes of the factory workers, under the influence and leadership of the Bolshevik Party organisations, frequently assumed the forms of street demonstrations, and in this way the economic strikes developed into a political struggle.

In the history of the Labour Movement of Czarist Russia there were many cases when strikes at individual factories developed into strikes of all the factories of the entire city and affected other cities as well. All such strikes, despite the underground work of the Bolsheviks, demanded incredible sacrifices on their part as well as on the part of the revolutionary workers. But these sacrifices, this struggle and daily activity gave rise to new cadres who continued the struggle. In this way the Bolshevik cells became organisers of the struggle of the masses and conducted the economic and political struggles.

The third congress of the Comintern held in 1921 adopted the first theses on the question of the structure of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries. Up to 1924 the Communist Parties completely failed to respond to these decisions of the third congress. Now many of the Communist Parties already have factory cells but in most cases, especially in the legal Communist Parties, they do not work at the factories. The Social-Democratic traditions of Party structure have been so strongly rooted in some of the Communist Parties that they press upon the Party members even when Bolshevik forms of organisation are already applied. Factory Party cells already exist in many of the factories but they are still very far from changing the method of their work. They discuss the Party questions, participate in the campaigns for the election of factory committees, sometimes even publish factory newspapers, but they do not attend to the questions of the factory, they do not conduct oral individual agitation in the factories, at the factory gates, in the tram-car, sub-way and train, while travelling to and from work, they rarely speak at the meetings held by the factory committees, which are addressed by Social-Democrats and reformists and where it is easier to prove and reveal their treachery. The factory cells do not direct or control the work of the Communists in the factory committees led by the reformists. They leave the red factory committees without leadership; that is why the work of the red factory committees is frequently in no way superior to that of the reformist committees. The most important Party and trade union campaigns are not conducted by the Party committees through the factory cells. Even the municipal, Landtag and Parliamentary elections which are held quite frequently are still carried out, not through the factory cells, but

through the street cells. All this leads to the factory cells learning of strikes in the shops and even in the factories in which the members of the cells are employed, *only after they are already begun*. Even in those cases when the factory cells and the groups of the trade union opposition and red trade unions do prepare for a strike, as soon as the strike committees are elected, they withdraw from the leadership and cease to exist as organisations, of which the reformists are naturally quick to take advantage.

This may be said of the majority of the cells existing in the factories and mills of the capitalist countries. This does not mean that there are no cells there which are working excellently, which have proved that the factory cell system is superior to the Social-Democratic system of building the Party organisation. Unfortunately, however, such cells constitute a minority, *while the enormous majority of the cells in the factories do not work at all, or work poorly*. In very many cases not all the members of the party employed in the factories join the factory cells.

The Bolshevik Party knew only one form of lower organisation, the cell in the factory, office, army barracks, etc. Taking into consideration the conditions abroad, the Comintern was forced to introduce an additional form of organisation, the street cells. They were introduced for such members of the Party as housewives, small artisans, etc. The street cells were to be used for the Party work in the places of residence. The street cells are to embrace also the unemployed members of the Party until they find work; it is impossible to force an unemployed member of the Party to go to the factory where he was formerly employed in order to attend a cell meeting (if a cell exists there) when these unemployed simply have not the means of paying for their fare to the factories. The street cells have definite tasks; to canvass the homes of the workers, to distribute handbills, to help in the election campaigns, to give outside help to the factory cells.

In the big cities abroad, it happens that a worker is employed in the city itself, but lives far away from the city, sometimes even in a town located several miles from the city. But in the evening, as well as week-ends, the Party members living far from their places of work must be utilised by the local Party committees and street cells for Party work in their place of residence. The basic work of these Party members still remains that in their factory cell.

But instead of making it into a subsidiary organisation, the Communist Parties made the street cell the predominant organisation. They began to create street cells on such a scale that



they embraced 80 per cent. and sometimes even more of the Party members.

In other words, in the street cells they found a loophole through which they sought to *drag in the old form of organisation*, to leave intact the old territorial form of organisation of the Party members. And the entire struggle of the organisational department of the E.C.C.I. for the past five years to get the Communist Parties to check up the membership of the street cells and remove from them those employed in the factories gave practically no results. If we take the figures of the German Communist Party we will see that at the end of December, 1931, they had 1,983 factory cells and 6,196 street cells. In membership they are full-blooded, but their activity is weak. In other cases they began to create so-called concentration groups so as to avoid organising factory cells. They take a few men from different factories and create a group to serve this factory. Such concentration groups, especially in England, could not produce the same results as factory cells. In France cells were created consisting of 1-2 workers of the factory and 12-16 members from outside the factory. And these were also called factory cells! To these 12-16 members of the Party, the events in the factory appear trifling, so that the cell naturally attends to anything, but what takes place in the factory.

*Difficulties in the work of the Communist Cells in the Factories of the Capitalist Countries and the Methods for Overcoming these Difficulties.*

There are, of course, serious difficulties in the work in the factories which the teachers must not ignore. In Czarist Russia the Bolshevik Party was illegal and the Party cells were naturally also illegal. When the Party became legal the cells also became entirely legal. Abroad the situation is quite different. The Parties in the principal capitalist countries are legal, but the cells must be illegal. Unfortunately, they do not succeed in working unnoticed. The employers and their spies detect the revolutionary workers and throw them out of the factory without meeting with any protest on the part of the reformist trade unions; on the contrary, the latter frequently act themselves as the initiator in the expulsion of the Communists from the factories. But inasmuch as the work of the Communists in the factories is weak as a rule the workers do not defend the discharged Communists (though there have been opposite cases, as well, of course). Under these conditions the factory cells do nothing in most cases, or if they display the least activity, their members are thrown out of the factories, owing to failure to conceal even their insignificant work. There are frequently also cases when the Communists are thrown out of the factories even when

they do nothing there, simply because of their membership in the Communist Party. The teachers of the International Communist Universities must remember this difficulty. They must explain to the students in the discussion of the work in the legal Communist Parties how such cells can and must organise their work, and it is here that the *Bolshevik experience of illegal work in the factories* under the Czar which produced such excellent results, can be utilised. Let this not appear as a trifle. The Communist Parties suffer very much from their inability to conduct conspirative work in the factories, losing members and revolutionary workers, through their expulsion from the factories. To some Communists it may appear a shame that the Social-Democrats, the nationalists and the members of the other Parties are able openly to proclaim their Party affiliation while they, despite the fact that the Communist Party is legal, must hide their membership in it. Is not such secrecy cowardice? Or right opportunism? Not in the least. This would be cowardice and opportunism if the members of the cells, or the individual Communists, feared and evaded addressing the factory workers' meetings against the reformists and Social-Democrats, when they proposed to agree to a lowering of the living standards of the workers, to approve the dismissal of the workers, or when they vote for the proposals of the Social-Democrats and reformists, etc. Such cases, unfortunately, have occurred. But there is no need at all to shout in the factories and mills that we are Communists and while shouting thus, not always conducting Communist work. It is possible and necessary to carry on *real Party work* connecting the Party slogans with the every-day struggle in the factories, without calling oneself a member of the Party or cell. It is always possible to find appropriate forms for this. Is it not possible to say; to-day I read such and such a report, this or that, or "a worker from our factory or from the neighbouring factory told me . . .," etc? In short, everything in the spirit of the decisions of the cell and Party, though in form there is no shouting about it; it may even appear "innocent." Even in those cases when anyone addresses the workers' meeting in the factory on instructions from the cell, it is not always necessary to declare that he speaks in the name of the cell. The main point is that their speeches should always be in the spirit of the decision of the cell, while the motions should be prepared or approved by the cell bureau. The other members of the cell and their sympathisers must not only vote for the motion made by the comrade sent by the cell but also conduct agitation among the workers for this motion. In the illegal Parties the situation is different. There

both the Party and the cells are illegal, but unfortunately even the illegal Parties have not yet learned properly to disguise their work.

There is one more important difficulty which the teachers must remember and sharply emphasise.

In Czarist Russia the rules and regime in the factories were lenient compared with those in the factories of the big capitalist countries, especially compared with what we have now after the introduction of capitalist rationalisation which sweats the workers to death, after the introduction of the conveyer system. Before the fall of Czarism the workers were so miserably paid by their employers, and conducted such a vigorous struggle against the deterioration of the rules in the factories that the manufacturers were forced, on the whole, to give up the idea of introducing Taylorism in the exploitation of the workers. This facilitated the Party work in the factories. Besides, the workers in the factories and mills, no matter what so-called Socialist Parties they may have belonged to,\* joined the Bolshevik workers in the economic and political struggles (strikes, demonstrations, and even uprisings). But this does not at all mean that the Bolshevik Party, the factory cells, or the individual Bolsheviks drifted with the current, that they hid their Bolshevik principles in the factory. On the contrary, in the factories and mills as well as in the illegal newspapers and appeals, the Bolsheviks conducted a great, vigorous campaign against the Mensheviks, liquidators, Trotskyists, Socialist-revolutionists, people's Socialists, etc. The Bolsheviks, by their convincing agitation, by their arguments in the debates with the members of other Parties, by their reasoned and timely proposals, by their knowledge of the situation of the workers in the factories, by their methods of work, by drawing the workers into the solution of the questions, by patient preparation of the struggle, by their methods of organisation, proved their corrected and superiority to the other Parties; that is why the Bolshevik Party succeeded in establishing in the factories and mills the united front from below, with the workers of all tendencies throughout the history of the Labour Movement in Russia, even when the Mensheviks shouted about the Bolshevik "strike fever" in 1912-1914 and when under Kerensky, the Moscow Bolsheviks in August, 1917, called a general strike against the Moscow State Conference in which the Mensheviks and the Socialist-revolutionists played the first fiddle, and later, during the October days of 1917,

when the Bolsheviks organised the uprising against the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-revolutionists.

Some of the favourable conditions mentioned above are not enjoyed by the present-day Communist Parties. Thus, they are forced to conduct the economic struggle—and not only the economic—both against the Social-Democrats, the reformist trade unions, the Fascists, the yellows and everybody else.

All of them go hand in hand with the employers. The least carelessness in the work and the Communists, whether as members of the trade union opposition or the red trade unions, are thrown out of the factories. This makes it necessary to resort to such methods of work as will produce, in the struggle of the revolutionary proletariat, the highest effect with the least losses.

Such methods are the tried Bolshevik methods alone. The Communists must and should overcome all the difficulties. The greater the difficulties, the more patient and determined must be the work of the Communists inside the factory, near its gates and everywhere where the workers and the unemployed are found.

The contents and methods of the work must be Bolshevik. It is necessary to systematically convince, and prove by convincing arguments instead of denouncing the opponents, especially the Social-Democratic and reformist workers. It is necessary to systematically expose the Social-Democracy and the reformists in a popular manner with the aid of facts, without, however, forgetting the national Socialists and all other enemy Parties still followed by the workers. But agitation alone is insufficient. It is necessary to organise the struggle, it is necessary to prove to the workers that the Communists are able to organise the struggle and paralyse the manœuvres of the Social-Democrats and reformists. This can be achieved by the application of Bolshevik methods of work and organisation, not a mechanical application, but one depending upon the concrete conditions. At the present moment when the situation of the workers in every capitalist country has been incredibly worsened, when the number of unemployed has mounted into the millions, when all the burdens of the economic and financial crisis coupled with the expenses of the preparation for imperialist wars and the attacks upon the U.S.S.R. are being thrown on the backs of the toilers, it becomes possible and absolutely necessary for the Communist Party to overcome all the difficulties and improve its work.

#### *Enrolment of Communist Party Members and the Membership Fluctuation.*

How are new members enrolled by the Communist Parties? The Bolsheviks enroll and have

\*After 1905 there were formed "Black Hundred Gangs" led by Czarism, which wormed themselves into the railway service, especially among the clerks. In the factories and mills they completely failed to gain an influence among the workers.



enrolled revolutionary workers in the factories. Only after the capture of the power did the Bolsheviks begin to organise Party weeks, that is, campaigns for the enrolment of members, these campaigns also being conducted in the factories. Prior to the October Revolution the Bolsheviks enrolled members on the basis of the every-day work. Those admitted to the Party were drawn into the Party work and included in political circles.

How is the enrolment of members by the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries organised to this day? Members are enrolled at meetings, at great mass meetings. Sometimes even in the streets (in England). A speaker makes a fiery speech, carries away the worker, and the latter submits an application for admission to the Party. Let us assume that in doing this he gives his address. However, our Party organisations have not been in a hurry to establish contact with such comrades, to bring them into the Party organisations, to find them in their homes, to ascertain where they work in order to get in touch with their factory cell or street. While they take their time a large number of applicants disappears in an unknown direction: some changing their addresses, some leave for other cities, some lose their ardour about joining the Communist organisation. Precisely because the admission to the Party takes place not in the factories, not on the basis of the work of the Party in the factories, through the creation of a body of active non-party workers who make themselves conspicuous in the everyday work, particularly during strikes and demonstrations, and from among whom the cells recruit new Party members, even those whom we have already enrolled leave us. I could cite perfectly amazing figures to characterise the fluctuation in the Communist Parties.

In January, 1930, the German Communist Party, according to its data, had 133,000 dues paying members; during 1930 another 143,000 members were admitted, so that in 1931 the total membership ought to have amounted to 276,000. But at the end of December, 1930, the C.P. of Germany had only 180,000, which means that in 1930, 95,000 members dropped their membership in the C.P. of Germany. In 1931, the situation, according to the figures of the Organisational Department of the E.C.C.I., based upon the statistics of the C.P. of Germany, was as follows: the number of newly-admitted members was 210,000, but at the same time as many members left the Party as in 1930. Would all of these Party members have left the Party had the organisations worked well, had they given attention to the new members, had they drawn the new members into

Party work, had they supplied them with proper literature, had they formed circles and included within them these members so that they would study there? Would under such conditions all those who felt the party have left it? I think they would not.

While the workers and employees are being thrown out of the factories in masses, the enrolment of Party members must be carried out mainly among the employed workers, especially in the big factories of the key industries. The Party organisations are obliged particularly to pay attention to the members of the Party in these factories and industries; they should be drawn into the discussion of all the questions of the current policy of the Party. They should be given assistance in the preparation of speeches at the factory meetings, in the oral agitation among the workers of the factory, they should be supplied with materials against the social-democrats, reformists, national Socialists, the Government, etc. Similar work should be carried out among the Party activists who conduct the Party and trade union work among the unemployed and within the reformist trade unions. If such work is carried out the number of Party members, new and old, leaving the Party, will decline. For the fact that thousands and hundreds of thousands are joining the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union organisations proves that the workers agree with the slogans, tactics and programme of the Communist Parties and with the programmes of the mass organisations. But the internal life of the local organisations and their activity does not satisfy the revolutionary workers so that a large section of the newly-admitted members leaves them. To the teachers of the international universities as well as to the activists and cadres who are to engage in the Party work, these questions of enrolment and maintenance of new members are far from indifferent. To these questions must be given special attention. The question must be carefully studied. Perhaps the teachers are already giving attention to the fact which I have pointed out, but what I say is based on practice and practical results. And in this field we find that the Communist Parties have not yet received the cadres which are necessary for the correct building of the Party organisation.

*The Party Committees, Inner-Party Democracy, Party Discipline, Methods of Leadership, Self-Criticism, Democratic Centralism, the Question of Cadres.*

Take the Party committees. When the Bolsheviks built their party during and after the Czarist régime the Party committees were collec-

tive organs, all of whose members participated in the decision of questions, and had distinct functions of their own.

The district and city Party committees considered and decided all questions connected with the economic and political struggle of the proletariat within the framework of the decisions of the congresses and plenums of the Party C.C., of the C.C. directions, of the Central Organ and of Comrade Lenin's instructions. They not only discussed and issued instructions as to how these decisions and directives should be applied in the given province and city, but took upon themselves the organisation of the operation of these decisions, explaining and popularising them. They gave special attention to the local committees which were directly connected with the factories. They saw to it that the Party decisions and the directions of the Party committees should be discussed in all the Party organisations, especially that they should pass resolutions on them and adopt methods for their realisation. They saw to it that the Party organisations should not violate the inner-party democracy, but at the same time they also saw to it that the strictest discipline should prevail in the Party organisations. The questions were discussed before a decision was adopted. But as long as a decision was adopted it had to be carried out without question by all the Party members, including those who opposed it and voted against it. This did not of course interfere with any criticism of the Party committees after the decisions had been carried out, as well as with self-criticism on the part of the Party committees, etc. But the criticism and self-criticism only led to an improvement of the methods of work of the leadership, to the strategy and tactics being worked out more carefully and the mistakes being corrected. The leadership of the Party, the leadership of the district and city committees did not restrict themselves to "pure" politics only. They engaged in questions of programme, policy and organisation. They did not separate policy from organisation, the adoption of decisions from their realisation. This was in the tremendous majority of cases correct, vital, revolutionary Bolshevik leadership. This is why the divergency between the ideological influence over the masses and its organisational consolidation was not large.

An entirely different position prevails in the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries. There very frequently no local Party committees exist, and where they do exist the only one doing any work, at best, is the secretary, who is sometimes paid and sometimes unpaid, while the Party committees exist only in the form of attachments

to the secretaries, do not function regularly as collective organs.

Where the Party committees exist, very frequently all the reports at the plenums are made by the secretaries and whatever they propose is adopted because the Party committees (that is their individual members) are not in touch with the Party affairs. These local and city committees are unable, of course, either to organise the work of the cells or to give them proper leadership. To the local party organs, especially the lower ones, special attention must be given.

In many cases the decisions of the congresses and C.C. of the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries are not discussed in the factory, street, cells or residential party groups which still exist in large numbers. These decisions are discussed at meetings of the city or district activists and that is where the matter ends.

The directives of the C.C. and regional committees rarely reach the cells, are marooned in the district committees, yet directives applying, say, to the conduct of mass campaigns are meant mainly for the cells since it is precisely the cells which come into direct contact with the masses. The cells, residential groups, are on the whole passive. They do not live a full life as is dictated by the conditions of the present period; this too is a social-democratic tradition. These Party organisations come to life only before election campaigns. That is why there are many cases of inner-Party democracy and Bolshevik discipline being absent from the Party organisations. In this situation it is not surprising that the decisions of the congresses, the directives of the Comintern and C.C. remain unfulfilled. Take for instance the decisions of the C.I. congresses, of the congresses of the different Parties, of the E.C.C.I. and of the C.C. calling for the shifting of the centre of gravity of the Party and trade union work into the factories, for the improvement of the work of the lower links of the Party and trade union organisations, especially in the factories, etc.

Apparently the cause for the absence of Bolshevik methods of Party work should be sought in the incorrect policy of the leading (central, district, sub-district and partly local) Party cadres.

But there is "self-criticism" galore. They criticise themselves openly during strikes, when it is necessary to reorganise the work in the course of the struggle, during campaigns, when it is necessary to change the methods and contents of the work in order to improve the organisation of the Party forces for the purpose of extending and deepening the campaign. They criticise themselves upon the conclusion of the



strikes and campaigns, which is all right, but they repeat the same old mistakes during the next strikes and campaigns. We have plenty of such cases.

In the Bolshevik Party, even under the Czar, when the Party was illegal, we had democratic centralism. The Party organisations did not wait for instructions from the C.C., the regional committees, the provincial committees and the city committees; without waiting for them, they acted, depending upon the local conditions, upon the events, within the framework of the general Party decisions and directives. The initiative of the local Party organisations, of the cells, was encouraged. Were the Bolsheviks of Odessa or Moscow, of Baku, or Tiflis, always to have waited for directives from the C.C., the provincial committees, etc., which during the years of the reaction and of the war frequently did not exist at all owing to arrests, what would have been the result? The Bolsheviks would not have captured the working masses and exercised any influence over them. The provincial and city committees themselves published appeals and leaflets on all occasions when this was necessary.

Unfortunately, in many Communist Parties there is *supercentralism*, especially in the legal parties. The C.C. must supply leaflets to the local organisations, the C.C. must first state its opinion on the events in order that the locals should wake up. The responsibility does not exist which the Party organisation must have in order to act at any moment, regardless of whether directives exist or not, on the basis of the decisions of the Party and Comintern. And even in those cases when corresponding directives of the centre do exist, they frequently do not reach the mass of the membership, and at the same time there is not sufficient control over the execution of the directions on the part of the higher organs. All this must be combatted and the teachers must remember this side of the question in the work.\*

Since the Bolshevik Party under the Czar was illegal up to the February revolution, no big apparatus existed either at the centre (in the C.C.) or locally (in the district, local and provincial committees); they did not and could not have permanent headquarters necessary for any more or less reasonable apparatus. The financial resources would also not allow a large apparatus. For this reason the centre of gravity of the

Party work (and not only of the Party work, but even of the work of the legal and illegal trade unions) was naturally shifted into the factories and mills. This situation of the Party work continued during the period of February to October, 1917, as well, when the Bolshevik Party became legal and carried out enormous mass work while the apparatus of the C.C., of the regional and provincial committees was quite small. As before the principal attention was given to the work of the local committees, sub-local committees and factory cells.

In the legal parties of the capitalist countries the order in the Party apparatus is the reverse: these Communist Parties, being legal, have quite a number of convenient premises at their disposal to house their apparatus.

The main forces of the apparatus (the agitation, organisation, trade union, women's, parliamentary, village and other departments) are concentrated in the C.C., regional and provincial committees, while the local committees and the cells are empty. In many local committees in the industrial centres—not to speak of the cells—there are even no paid secretaries. The local committees must receive "everything" from the centre: that is why the initiative of the local Party organisations is deadened. The E.C.C.I. has been waging a determined struggle against this phenomenon. In the Bolshevik Party the centre of the Party work lay in the factories and mills, in the factory cells. The struggle is all the more necessary because here again the question is not one of simply organisational condition of legality or illegality. The question consists in taking a course to the masses, to a close permanent connection with them. The forms of organisation must be subjected to these aims and serve them, not the reverse.

In the legal Communist Parties of the capitalist countries the connection with and leadership of the masses are in most cases of a paper character—through circulars; the press, literature, written and oral agitation are abstract and not concrete: they do not, as a rule, correspond to the concrete situation. This is due to the fact that under the conditions described above there are not suitable cadres capable of acting locally and directly in contact with the masses. This leads us therefore to the question of proper Party cadres. In the Bolshevik Party the Party cadres were forged in the mass practical work. They learned through this work to react to all the events in the life of the worker. They not only knew what the worker thinks and how he lives, but they also responded to it; they organised the struggle, they pointed the way out to the worker; that is why the Bolshevik

\*In the Bolshevik Party the buttress of Party work was cells in the factories and works. The connection with the masses, who were led through the cells and Communist fractions in the mass organisations was a living one. The Party press literature, the written, spoken agitation, was based on the masses.

Party even during the days of the Czar exercised such a great influence over the masses, enjoyed such a great prestige among the working class.

The higher and middle Party cadres in the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries are in most cases revolutionary ex-members of the Social-Democratic Parties. Their methods of work remained in most cases the same as in the S.D. Many of them have not yet freed themselves from the Social-Democratic traditions.

And even a large section of the new young cadres who have been brought to the fore during the last few years in some of the Communist Parties, are inexperienced, are also unable to work concretely and independently, and, in view of the excessive centralisation of the leadership ("everything" from the centre!), they are poorly learning the art of independent initiative and concrete leadership in the local work.

## PART II.

# THE BOLSHEVISATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES BY MEANS OF OVERCOMING THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS

O. PIATNITSKY.

### *The Communist Fractions and their Relations with the Party Committees.*

OF course, it was easier for the Bolsheviks than for the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries to establish the mutual relations between the Communist fractions and Party committees since the Party organisations actually conducted a great variety of activities, they led the economic struggle, organised trade unions and co-operative societies and created all sorts of labour organisations, such as were allowed to exist under the Czarist regime, from 1905 until the war. That is why the Party organisations were recognised authorities in the eyes of the workers in all these organisations, especially of the Party members and sympathisers. This situation appeared to all to be quite natural and no one raised any question about it. When we came into power there were some tendencies among certain Soviet Communist fractions to supplant the Party organs, but this was a passing phenomenon. The relations between the Party organisations and the Communist fractions (or individual Communists) in the non-Party mass labour organisations prior to and, especially, since the capture of power, have been such that the Party organisations decide the important questions while the Communist fractions and the individual Communists, no matter what non-Party organisations

may be affected, carry the decisions into effect. The Communist fractions themselves decide upon the methods for carrying out the decisions. In their everyday work they are entirely independent. They can and must display initiative in their work within the non-Party organisations and bodies. The Communist fractions in the leading bodies of the non-Party organisations must not only report to the conferences and congresses which elected them, but also to the Party committees. Prior to the October Revolution, and even immediately after it, when there were still Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in some of the non-Party mass organisations, the Bolsheviks converted each newly-gained position into a stronghold for the capture of the organisation in the district, city, region and nationally. They demonstrated their ability to work better than the others, prepare the questions, lead, and weld together and organise the masses of the workers. That is why they succeeded in driving the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other "Socialist" and populist parties out of the mass labour organisations.

In the Communist Parties in capitalist countries things are different because in them Social-Democratic traditions are still preserved, which are frequently interwoven with sectarianism. The trade unions and the other proletarian mass



organisations, as has been pointed out above, arose before the Social-Democratic Parties in the principal capitalist countries and made a strong position for themselves in the working class as independent organisations which led the economic struggle.

The members of the Social-Democratic Parties who led the mass proletarian organisations, therefore, had a definite amount of independence. Moreover, the Social-Democratic Party not only did not oppose this independence but on the contrary, they themselves developed the theory that the trade unions were equal in value to, and therefore should have equal rights with, the Party, that the trade unions were neutral organisations. As has been said already, the only exception in this respect was the Bolshevik Party. A number of cases could be quoted in the history of German Social-Democracy for instance, when the decisions of the trade union congresses differed from those of the Social-Democratic Party Congresses—for instance on the question of the general strike in 1905. And this was so despite the fact that the delegates to the trade union congresses were Social-Democrats who knew the standpoint of the Party. The same thing occurred in connection with the celebration of the First of May. Before the war the Social-Democratic Parties in Central Europe celebrated May Day on the first of May, while the Social-Democratic “free” trade unions sabotaged the First of May celebration, in order to avoid paying victimisation to workers who might lose their jobs for taking part in the May Day celebration on the First of May. The trade unions urged that May Day should be celebrated on the first Sunday in May. These relations which existed between the Social-Democratic Parties and the trade unions before the war, and which the Bolsheviks regarded as abnormal (since the war surprising unanimity has been displayed between the Social-Democratic Parties and trade unions and there has been complete co-operation between them in betraying the interests of the working class in their respective countries) cannot be tolerated in a Bolshevik Party since they prevent uniform leadership being exercised over all forms of the revolutionary labour movement. But they have been inherited from the Social-Democratic Parties by the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries.

The abnormal relations between the Communist Parties and the Communist fractions in the trade unions and in all the other mass proletarian organisations are due to two fundamental causes: the Party committees sometimes supplant the mass organisations, they remove the elected secretaries and appoint others, they openly publish in the press such things as: We propose to the red trade unions that they do this or that; that

is, they act in a way as is very rarely done even by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Usually the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or of the local Party committees are carried out through the Communist fractions or through individual Party members working in this or that non-Party organisation. Another cause of the abnormal relations is that the individual members of the Communist Party work on their own accord, disregard the directions of the Party organs or disobey them. There have been cases in France, for instance, when the Party organs thought that they must do absolutely everything, that they must take the place of the International Red Aid, the trade unions, the co-operative and sport organisations, where they alone can perform the functions of these organisations. This is absolutely wrong. Even had the leadership of many of the Communist Parties been a hundred times superior to what it is, in reality, they could not do the work of these organisations. This, in fact, is unnecessary because both the Central Committee and the local Party organisations should only determine the line, see that the line is carried out, lead the Communist fractions and the individual Communists working in the mass organisations. The Central Committee and the Party committees must get their directives carried out in the mass labour organisations through the Communist fractions or the individual Party members where there are no fractions, but they must not do their work for them.

However, I think it is hardly necessary to go into further details to prove that these incorrect relations between the Party, the trade unions and the mass organisations generally interfere with the extension of the Party connections among the masses, with the real consolidation of the Party among the masses.

In the countries in which there are red trade unions there exist side by side with them, in the same industries, trade unions of other tendencies. However, the red trade unions have very rarely succeeded in capturing whole organisations, or more or less considerable groups of members, from the trade unions of other tendencies.

The trade union oppositions in the reformist trade unions frequently succeed in gaining a majority in the local branches of the different reformist trade unions. But the Communist Parties and the trade union oppositions do not convert these into strongholds from which to extend their influence over the other branches of the same union or over branches of other trade unions which are affiliated to the same local trades council. This can be only explained by the fact that the opposition branches not infrequently take up the same position as trade unions. The same

applies to the red factory committees. They do not receive proper leadership and the necessary aid in their work.

#### THE PRESS.

The Bolshevik Party Press, expressing as it does the Party line, has always carried out the decisions of the Party both during the illegal period and at the present time. It mobilises, organises and educates the masses of the workers.

The Party press must not be separated from the Party committees. Abroad, the Social-Democratic Parties used to elect the editors of the Party newspapers at their congresses. There were cases when the Central Committee could do nothing with such a newspaper: the paper had its own line while the Central Committee followed its line. Such was the case in Germany with the *Vorwärts*, the same occurred in Italy with *Avanti*. The Communist Parties naturally discarded these "excellent" traditions. But the "independent" press which the Social-Democrats had before the war nevertheless left a deep impress upon the Communist Parties as well. Not that the editors are appointed by the congresses and remain independent of the Central Committee and Party committees, this does not happen in the Communist Parties, but in many cases the Central Committee and the Party committees give very little attention to the Party press, and so the press in these cases goes its own way while Central Committee and the Party committees go their own way. The line of the Central Committee and of the Party committees often differs from that of the Party newspapers—but this is not because the Central Committee, the Party committees and the editors want this to be so.

In Germany we have 38 Party dailies. If all of these 38 daily newspapers had good and proper leadership they could exercise much greater influence upon the masses of the workers than they do at present. Remember that from 1912 to 1914 the Bolshevik Party had only one legal daily, *Pravda*. And what miracles *Pravda* performed in Russia in those days! What an inestimable help the *Pravda* was to the workers locally, though owing to the censorship it could not say everything it desired. *Pravda* wrote on all the most important and serious questions in popular language that could be understood even by the uneducated workers. *Pravda* devoted much space to events in the factories and mills. In those countries to which I have referred the newspapers are legal, they are able, more or less, to say whatever they think to express and carry out the Party line. Like the mass labour organisations, newspapers are channels through which the Communist Parties can and must influence the workers, through which they can and must

win the workers. One must know how to utilise the newspapers, how to run them properly.

The legal daily Communist press in many countries is not distinguished for popularity of style, the topical character of subjects discussed, or brevity of articles. The newspapers are filled with thesis-like articles instead of popular and brief expositions of the most important vital tasks. If the active members of the Party, the members of the Party generally, and the revolutionary workers do not get material for the fight against the Social-Democratic Parties, the reformists, the National-Socialists and other Parties, which still have a working class following, the responsibility for this must rest upon the press. The Party press must not only indicate the line and give facts proving the treachery of the Social-Democrats and reformists and exposing the demagoguery of the National-Fascists, but it must also explain how these facts should be utilised. Most of the Party newspapers contain no news from the factories. The Party press has no room for such things.

Not all the Communist Parties have yet learned to appreciate the importance of the Party press. Teachers at International Communist Party schools must give the Party press special attention in their work with the students. Many of the students graduating from the International Party schools become editors.

We have not observed that they are bringing fresh blood into and helping to revive the Party press; that they are breaking down the Social-Democratic traditions in this field.

#### AGITATION.

The capitalist world is at present experiencing a profound industrial crisis, an agrarian crisis, financial upheavals, an imperialist war in the Far East, which threatens to spread to the other countries. All this not only affects the workers and poor peasants, but also the urban petty bourgeoisie (office employees, Government officials, etc.).

These masses are much more open to Communist agitation under present conditions, when capitalist stabilisation has come to an end, than was the case during the period of capitalist "prosperity." Unfortunately, the agitation the Communist Parties carry on in their newspapers, leaflets and oral agitation is too abstract. It seems to be based on the assumption that all the workers know as much as those who write in the papers, who write the leaflets and speak at meetings. When an emergency decree is published in Germany which stings every worker to the quick, which cuts the wages or increases taxes, etc., instead of examining the decree point by point, instead of showing how much the



workers will have to pay in taxes, to what extent wages are to be cut, so that the masses can understand it all, instead of this, they simply write: We are opposed to the emergency decree! We demand a strike against this decree!

How did the Bolsheviks carry on agitation in the past and how do they do so at the present time? Did they do it in the way some of our Parties are doing it now? The strength of the Bolsheviks was due to the fact that they took up every question: be it a matter of a wage cut of even a kopek, of absence of lavatories, broken windows in the factories, hot water, fines, the quality of the provisions sold in the factory store, etc., etc., and argued about them this way and that until the workers themselves drew the logical political conclusions from them.

Take the strikes which occurred in 1903 in the South of Russia. The Bolsheviks succeeded in developing this economic strike movement which was initiated in Odessa by Shayevich and Co., the agents of Zubatov, Chief of the Moscow Secret Police, into a colossal political movement which affected the entire South. Many of the Communist Parties have not yet learned to agitate effectively, while the leading comrades acting as editors, agitators, etc., think that since they understand what is taking place it must be more or less clear to the workers as well. And this is the way they approach the Social-Democratic workers. Instead of taking every little fact of treachery—where it happened, when it happened, naming the witnesses, citing the exact records, relating just how and when the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders negotiated with the government and the employers and betrayed the interests of the working class, instead of painstakingly explaining this to the Social-Democratic, reformist and non-Party workers, our comrades keep repeating: "Social-Fascists and trade union bureaucrats," and that is all. And they think that having said "Social-Fascists" and "trade union bureaucrats," all the workers must understand just what is meant by these terms of abuse and believe that the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders deserved them. This only has the effect of repelling the honest workers who belong to the Social-Democratic Parties and the reformist trade unions, since they do not regard themselves either as Social-Fascists or trade union bureaucrats.

It should be quite clear, therefore, that methods of carrying on agitation must occupy a prominent place in the curriculum of International Communist Party Schools. Read Lenin's articles written in 1917. At that time the Bolshevik Party was accused of being in the pay of the German

imperialists.\* One would have thought that the only way to reply to such a charge, to such an insinuation, would be to say to the accusers: "You are scoundrels, rascals, we do not want to talk to you! We do not think it necessary to justify ourselves before you; you may think what you will, but we will continue our work." This is probably how many Communist Parties would have replied under the circumstances; they would have said that it was below their dignity to refute such mean accusations! But how did Lenin react to this charge? In the first place he began to explain who Alexinsky\* was, and listed all the foul acts by which Alexinsky had distinguished himself in France, that at such and such a meeting in France, this man had been thrown out because he was such a liar and skunk. He then returned to Russia. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, in which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries predominated would not receive him until he rehabilitated himself. Alexinsky began to attack the Bolsheviks in the press and accused them of working for the Germans, for money, in July, 1917. Lenin exposed this Alexinsky in his true colours, showed what a creature he really was. Having thus exposed the moral character of Alexinsky and destroyed him, Lenin then proceeded to reveal the part the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries played in this dirty campaign. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries knew that the Bolsheviks were being falsely accused of espionage. Tseretelli, the Menshevik leader, even telephoned to all the newspapers informing them that Alexinsky's document was a forgery and asking them not to publish it. Lenin then quoted a third fact. The slanderous document was known to the Provisional Government as early as June, yet it did not arrest any of those who were accused of being in the pay of the Germans. Hence, it was evident that the Provisional Government did not believe in this calumny against the Bolsheviks. Lenin analysed all these facts, dissected them in a popular style and then put the question: Who was at the head of the Government? Kerensky? No. The Central Executive Committee? No. It is the military. It was the military who wrecked our printing office! Who ordered it to be wrecked? Was it

\* "Zhivoe Slovo" (Living Word) a yellow sheet published in Petrograd, in its issue of July 18, 1917, No. 51, published a declaration signed by Alexinsky, a renegade Social-Democrat, and Pankratov, a Socialist-Revolutionary, in which they, on the evidence given by a certain Lieut. Yermalenko, under examination at the General Staff Headquarters and the Military Intelligence Service on April 28, 1917, accused the Bolsheviks of receiving money from German General Staff Headquarters for the purpose of carrying on anti-war propaganda.

the Provisional Government? No. Was it the C.E.C.? No. There is another power, that power is the military, and it was they who wrecked our printing shop. And do you know who stands behind the military? The Cadets.\* A day later, in another article, quoting the speech of the National-Socialist, Tchaikovsky, at the C.E.C., Lenin showed that the Cadets and the Western imperialists had common aims, that the imperialists were willing to provide money only if the Cadets came into power. Lenin began with Alexinsky but ended with the question of who was to be in power, with the question of the class character of the State. He did not merely hurl abuse, he did not say that it was beneath our dignity to refute the mean charges, but he proved that they were insinuations and lies which were first circulated by a yellow sheet and then taken up and trumpeted through the country by the entire bourgeois, Menshevik, Narodniki and Socialist-Revolutionary press.

By carrying on agitation in this simple manner, intelligible to the masses of the workers, the Bolsheviks succeeded not only in repelling the attack of the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionists and Cadets at a time when the situation was very acute for the Bolsheviks, but they succeeded in developing during the next three months wide agitation against all the Parties of that time, particularly against the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionists who still exercised some influence over the workers, peasants and soldiers. In this campaign the Bolsheviks utilised against these Parties, all their acts and deception on all questions that came to the front at that time. You must remember that in the period before the October Revolution, in 1917, millions of workers, soldiers and peasants had been drawn into the movement. Just before the October Days the Bolsheviks had already won the support of the entire working class and the majority of the soldiers, while the peasantry also supported the Bolshevik slogans for land and peace.

Is this the way the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries are carrying on their work of agitation? The Social-Democrats have committed so many acts of treachery against the working class of every country that one can easily understand the perplexity of the workers of the Soviet Union who frequently ask: what stuff are the foreign workers made of? The Social-Democrats daily betray their interests, we can see from here that they are being betrayed, yet these foreign workers still continue to vote for the Social-Democrats and remain in their Party. The reason why the Social-Democrats are still

able to get the support of the workers is that many Communist Parties do not know how to carry on agitation even in the extremely favourable situation which has been created by the present world industrial and agrarian crisis. The Communist Parties must present their criticisms in a detailed and painstaking manner particularly because the Social-Democratic leaders, despite their innumerable acts of treachery, still manage to find new forms for their demagogic manoeuvres. The German Social-Democrats have helped with all their might to carry out the emergency decrees, to rob the unemployed as well as the workers who are still employed. Now, they are introducing a series of demagogic bills in the Reichstag—to reduce unemployment, to increase unemployment benefits, to reduce rents, etc.—and at the same time, by voting against the Communists with whom, after the withdrawal of the National-Socialists, they have a majority in Reichstag, get the Reichstag dissolved indefinitely, without any date being fixed for its reassembly, without any discussion of their bills and, of course, without a discussion of the proposals of the Communist fraction. Under these conditions it is the duty of the Communist Parties to catch the Social-Democratic swindlers “red handed” as it were, to expose with facts and proof every one of their manoeuvres, every step in their treachery.

Both before and after the capture of the power, the Bolshevik Party managed to educate its members, to give them such instructions, such directives, as enabled all the members of the Party to work towards one aim; no matter where they were, no matter what functions they performed, all aimed towards one point. And yet, often the local Party bodies received their directives only through the press. The Bolshevik Party achieved all this by applying those methods of work which I have described above. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the majority of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries. There we have frequent cases of Party members aiming towards different points.

THE PRESENT SITUATION, TACTICS, SLOGANS, THE THEORY OF “LESSER EVIL” AND THE UNITED FRONT.

Before the October Revolution the Mensheviks ridiculed the Bolsheviks for frequently placing on the agenda of their meetings the question: “The Present Situation.” Yet, without making a precise analysis of a given situation and defining its character it is very difficult to determine the tactics to be pursued. The adoption of correct tactics in each given situation, and still more, the correct application of these tactics is a great art. To master this art means to ease the struggle and

\* Abbreviation for: Constitutional Democratic Party. The Party of the bourgeoisie. Ed.



the task of winning the masses. It is no small art to advance appropriate and timely slogans corresponding to the situation and to the needs of the moment. At the present time hardly anyone will think of denying the ability of the Bolsheviks to determine in masterly fashion the character of the situation, prevailing at any given moment, to adopt correct tactics and apt slogans to which the great masses would and do respond and rally. Comrade Lenin mocked at those Bolsheviks who clung to the tactics of yesterday and failed to see that they no longer suited the new stage, or changed situation (for instance, the proposal made by Kamenev and Bogdanov to boycott the elections to the Third State Duma in the same way as the Bolsheviks boycotted the First Duma).

It is this ability to define the "present situation" and to adopt correct tactics corresponding to the given situation that the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries often lack (and this despite the fact that the Comintern, unlike the Second International, decides and frequently lays down the tasks and tactical line of its sections).

While some Communist Parties regard the fall of this or that Cabinet as a "political crisis," others have regarded the temporary elimination of Parliament from the discussion of current questions as the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship and have deduced from it the necessity of proclaiming as the main slogan the struggle against Fascism, and therefore, of diminishing the struggle against the Social-Democratic Parties. When the mistake is rectified the struggle begins to be conducted against Social-Democracy alone and the Fascists are lost sight of. Very frequently the slogans advanced are absurd: sometimes they apply to domestic questions alone, sometimes they are directed against war, without, however, being organically connected with the questions of domestic policy. Unfortunately we have had absurd slogans not only in the field of "high" politics but also in the economic struggle where they are no less harmful. It is necessary to study very carefully and attentively the peculiarities of the developing situation, to watch its changes and tendencies, to study how the workers react to events, how the enemies, the Social-Democrats, the Fascists, etc., are preparing, what they are about to do, what tactics they are adopting.

Only such an analysis and study of the current situation can enable us to adopt correct tactics, correct and timely slogans and to carry on our agitation on proper lines. The questions arising out of the current situation should be broadly and frequently discussed in the Party press so that the analysis of the situation, the refutation of the arguments and agitation of the opponents,

the exposure of their plans and deceitful tricks might serve to arm, educate and prepare the Party members for the struggle. For the same purpose it is necessary to have frequent discussions on the current situation and the tasks of the Party at the Party meetings, meetings of the Party nuclei, etc.

Such discussions will not only enable the Party members to understand the Party line and tactics, to get their bearings on the burning problems of the day and to arm themselves with arguments for discussion and agitation in the factories, among the unemployed, in the trade union and in the street, but will also put more life into the nuclei and local Party organisations.

In recent years the Social-Democratic Parties and the reformist trade union bureaucrats have been making special use of the theory of the "lesser evil." The reformists persuade the workers to agree to a wage cut of 8 per cent. instead of the 12 per cent. "demanded" (not without a preliminary agreement with the reformists) by the employers. Then they proclaim this "gain" of 4 per cent. as a victory for the workers. The Social-Democratic Parties support the most despicable laws, which place upon the toilers a heavy burden of taxation and cut down wages, on the pretext that the Government and the bourgeoisie had intended to tax the workers even more heavily. And this too they represent as a victory for the workers. They propose to vote for Hindenburg whom in the 1925 elections they attacked as a reactionary and a monarchist, by representing Hindenburg to be the "lesser evil" compared with Hitler. The Russian Mensheviks also resorted to the theory of the "lesser evil." Thus, during the elections to the Second State Duma the Mensheviks, on the pretext that Russia was menaced by the Black Hundreds, urged the workers to vote for the Cadet Party. The Bolsheviks then struck the Mensheviks a crushing blow. They convinced the revolutionary electors that they must vote for the revolutionary candidates by showing that both prior to, during and after the 1905 revolution the Mensheviks supported the liberal bourgeoisie — just as the Social-Democratic Parties are now supporting the bourgeoisie in their respective countries on every question.

The Mensheviks opposed the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Hence, their cries about the Black Hundred danger was only a ruse designed to divert the working class from the correct revolutionary path. The Communist Parties have not yet succeeded in exposing the manoeuvre of the Social-Democratic Parties on the "lesser evil," by the methods with which the Bolsheviks exposed the Menshevik manoeuvre on the Black Hundred

danger. And as long as this false manoeuvre of the Social-Democratic Parties remains unexposed to the masses, it will be difficult to free the workers from their influence.

Among the vast masses of the workers there is a desire for unity. There have been many cases in different countries where the crafty agents of the bourgeoisie resorted to the unity slogan to dupe the workers.

The Social-Democrats too sometimes put forward the slogan of unity. And in this the renegade Trotsky hastens to their aid with his proposal for a "bloc" between the Communists and Social-Democrats. In support of his proposal he argues that the Bolsheviks and Comrade Lenin adopted the same tactics.

I have tried to show above how the Bolsheviks established the united front from below in the factories and mills.

Cases have occurred in the history of Bolshevism when the united front policy was applied simultaneously from below and above; but these cases occurred only in the midst of *actual struggle*. Such cases occurred in 1905 during the strikes, demonstrations, pogroms, uprisings (Moscow) for the duration of the action. So-called contact and federative committees were set up for the duration of the joint action. The united front which sprung up from below in the course of the practical, united struggle, compelled the Menshevik leaders to join the struggle which the Bolsheviks led. Joint manifestoes were issued. What was the situation during the Kornilov days in 1917, by referring to which the renegade Trotsky attempts to mislead the Communists?

At the end of August, 1917, Kerensky, not without the knowledge of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, invited Kornilov to march on Petrograd with loyal troops in order to strangle Bolshevik Petrograd. Kornilov came. But before reaching Petrograd he demanded that practically all power be transferred to him. The workers and soldiers who followed the lead of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries realised that if Kornilov came into power he would not only hang the Bolsheviks but would also hang them. Under pressure of the masses, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were compelled to join the struggle which was already proceeding under the leadership of the Bolsheviks. They were obliged to distribute arms to the workers of Petrograd for this struggle. This was a "bloc" only for the duration of the struggle against Kornilov. But even during the struggle against Kornilov the Bolsheviks did not discontinue the campaign against the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Provisional Government, who, by their betrayal of the interests of the workers, soldiers and peasants,

brought the country to the Kornilov affair and wavered between supporting Kornilov and fighting against him. Can there be any comparison between this and the situation in Germany? How is it possible to deduce from the Kornilov events the necessity of establishing a "bloc" with the German Social-Democrats, say, for the struggle against Fascism when the Social-Democrats are doing nothing but helping the Fascists and the bourgeoisie: the Social-Democratic Minister of the Police in Prussia dissolved the Red Front League because the latter fought against the Fascists, but at the same time he not only tolerated but protected the Fascist Shock Troops, while the Social-Democratic police always side with the Fascists and attack the workers whenever they resist the Fascists.

The Communists will not be deceived by the fact that Hindenburg, on the eve of the Prussian elections "dissolved" the Fascist Shock Troops. Officially these Fascist Shock Troops were declared dissolved, but their organisation was not destroyed, in fact no real damage was done to them. The object of this manoeuvre was to provide the Social-Democrats with the pretext for claiming that a fight was being waged against the Fascists and thus dupe the workers and win them over to their side.

Practically every Communist Party has made numerous mistakes in the application of the united front tactics. It must be said, however, that there have already been cases of a correct application of the united front tactics. An example of this is provided by the miners' struggle in Northern Bohemia which was led by the Communist Party and red trade unions of Czechoslovakia.\* It is necessary to avoid mistakes and at all costs secure the correct and energetic establishment of a Bolshevik united fighting front from below in the factories and mills.

#### LEGAL AND ILLEGAL WORK. THE UTILISATION OF LEGAL POSSIBILITIES.

The Bolshevik Party in Czarist Russia, although a completely illegal Party, yet managed to utilise legal possibilities to the utmost extent.

Beginning with 1905 legal weeklies and magazines of a more solid nature were published in various parts of vast Russia even in the years of blackest reaction. These were in addition to *Pravda*, the daily organ of the Bolshevik Party, which played such a tremendous rôle in the consolidation of the Bolshevik Party for the struggle against Czarism, the bourgeoisie, and the Mensheviks, the Liquidators, the Trotskyists, the Conciliators, etc.

In addition to the legal press, illegal Party newspapers and leaflets were of course published.

\* See No. 8 "Communist International."



The illegal Bolshevik Party utilised all legal congresses of public organisations: of doctors, co-operators, teachers, etc., in order to speak on the lines of the Bolshevik programme of demands. It worked in all the legal workers' societies, trade unions, co-operatives, recreation societies and other organisations. Moreover, the Bolshevik Party utilised the labour organisations formed by the Chief of Police, Zubatov and the priest, Father Gapon, during the period preceding 1905, in order to free the workers from the influence of the police agents and from these police traps, which it succeeded in doing by exposing the machinations of the police at the meetings of these very organisations.

How successful the work of the Bolsheviks was may be seen from the fact that the police priest, Gapon, was compelled by the pressure of the masses to include in his programme the most important demands of the minimum programme of the Bolshevik Party, in order to avoid being exposed as an agent of the police.

It must be said that not only have the illegal Communist Parties failed to utilise the legal possibilities, but, what is more surprising, even the legal Communist Parties have not succeeded in successfully employing underground methods of work, though they have far greater opportunities for doing so than the illegal Communist Parties.

When the legal Communist Press is temporarily suspended or when the authorities forbid them to write about the emergency decrees which are aimed against the working class and which have been coming thick and fast lately, or about the shooting down of demonstrators, etc., the legal Parties have failed to pour a stream of illegal newspapers and leaflets into the factories dealing with the topics which the legal papers are prohibited from writing about.

The same may be observed with regard to the prohibition of meetings and demonstrations. To call meetings for ostensibly other purposes, to call sudden demonstrations in the working-class districts, despite the injunctions, is not only possible but necessary in such cases after careful preparations have been made.

The authorities and the police close down newspapers for various periods, prohibit labour meetings and demonstrations at the most critical moments. The Communist Party is therefore vitally interested not only in telling the workers what the authorities seek to hide from them but in getting the workers to come out in protest under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Only in this way can the Communist Parties win the masses and become their leaders. In the absence of good cells in the factories it will be much more difficult to work and maintain connec-

tions with the masses when the legal Communist Parties are driven underground.

#### URGENT TASKS.

##### 1. *Communist and Trade Union Work in the Factories.*

What is the main point that should be emphasised in the course of studies at the Communist Party Schools? *Work in the factories at all costs.* Unless work is carried on in the factories it will be impossible to win the majority of the working class, and that means that it will be impossible to fight successfully for the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the first point. But work in the factories assumes exceptional importance in view of the approaching imperialist war, which will mean, in the first place, the break-up of the legal revolutionary labour movement, of the legal Communist organisations and of trade unions. Under such conditions work in the factories becomes more important than ever, and almost the only means of maintaining contacts with the masses of the factory workers, of influencing them and guiding their actions. Moreover, in time of war, nearly all factories are transferred to the production of munitions and the manufacture of supplies for the imperialist armies of the home country or of other countries; consequently, the fight against war must, more than ever, be carried on in the factory.

Work in the factories is a difficult matter. At the present time, when unemployment is rife, all the revolutionary workers are being discharged. Our task is to penetrate into the factories and mills at all costs, by all means, if necessary, under another flag, it makes no difference how, but we must penetrate into the factories in order to carry on Communist work in them. Wide and popular agitation must be carried on of the kind that the Bolsheviks carried on in the old days, and from February to October, 1917. The Communist Parties in the principal capitalist countries are still legal. They have their own Press, they can call meetings. But the work of agitation must assume a different character; it must be developed in the factories, at the factory gates, at the tram stops, near the subway stations, wherever the workers and office employees work and congregate. You must train a body of active people who know how to speak briefly and clearly, you must supply them with information and instructions and send them into the street, into the factories and mills as agitators. Is this possible? It certainly is possible. The students who return to work should know this, should know how to do this themselves and how to organise this work.

## 2. Strikes.

How should strikes be prepared? How should they be conducted, what demands should be advanced? These are not easy questions. They present very many difficulties to the majority of the Communist Parties, red trade unions and trade union oppositions. Up to very recently many of the Communist Parties advanced demands only from the maximum programme and did not take the trouble to advance every-day demands.

Now they seem to be saying: Let us advance only every-day demands without any connection with the politics struggle and the maximum programme, for when we advanced political demands the workers did not listen to us, did not follow us, and the work was badly done. We know from experience that the Bolsheviks always connected politics with economics and economics with politics. I know cases in 1905 when in starting a political strike the Bolsheviks advanced economic demands and *vice versa*.

To prepare strikes well is a difficult task. There was an enormous difference between the Social-Democratic reformists and the Bolsheviks both in the aims they pursued in strikes as well as in the organisation and conduct of strikes. The Bolsheviks collected information on the conditions of the workers in the factories; they conducted activities among the individual workers in order to explain the situation to them. When the preparatory work was finished (after the cell had discussed all the details of the strike with the revolutionary non-party *activists*) the strike would be declared, the demands put forward, a strike committee would be elected which called the workers together and put to them the questions connected with the strike. If the strike committee and the revolutionary *activists* were arrested a new committee would be formed in the same way. There were no collective agreements then. If the strikes broke out unexpectedly—owing to a worsening of labour conditions, accidents, the absence of safety screens around the machines, etc.—the Bolsheviks of the given factory placed themselves in the leadership of the movement, formulated demands, etc. Thus, strikes were prepared from below, in the factories, and in those cases when strikes spread from factory to factory, or from city to city, this did not always occur spontaneously. The party organisations in the city, district and the factory cells discussed methods for broadening the movement, etc. The Bolsheviks, in conducting strikes, pursued two objectives: firstly, an improvement of the material and cultural standards of the workers, and, secondly, the broader objective of drawing the largest possible number of workers into the general proletarian struggle for the overthrow of

the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As soon as trade unions were formed, the Social-Democrats and the reformists introduced such centralisation in the matter of strikes that the trade union members in the factories could not go on strike without the sanction of their trade union. Whenever they went on strike without such sanction and the Union Executive (chairman) refused to approve the strike, it would be declared to be "unofficial" and the strikers refused material assistance. When they did sanction a strike it took the leadership into its own hands and the strikers had nothing to do except perhaps send pickets to the place of the strike if this was required. When the reformist trade unions grew strong they began to conclude long-term collective agreements with the employers' associations and during the period the collective agreement remained in force strikes rarely occurred. Strikes, sometimes big strikes, took place whenever a new collective agreement had to be negotiated. In such cases the strikes were led by the Central Committees of the unions. The strikers at best had to act as pickets. The reformist trade unions were guided in the conduct of the economic struggle (before the war they conducted strikes) only by the desire to improve the material and cultural standards of the working class, completely neglecting the struggle against the capitalist system as a whole. The Communist Parties, in leading relatively small red trade unions which almost invariably are dual unions, or trade union oppositions with the reformist trade unions, in most cases adopted not the Bolshevik but the Social-Democratic, reformist method of preparing strikes, the method of preparing them in their offices, without always knowing the sentiments of the workers. For that reason, to this day the workers frequently fail to respond to the strikes called by the red trade unions and trade union oppositions, sometimes workers come out on strike from factories that were not expected to come out on strike.

In the International Party Schools the students must also learn how to prepare, conduct and lead strikes.

## 3. The Struggle Against the Reformists and Social-Democratic Parties.

The Social-Democrats and the reformists must be exposed, they should be shown up for what they say and what they actually do. This must be done day in and day out, in every article of the party press, in leaflets and in oral agitation.

It is necessary to watch the Social-Democratic and reformist press and immediately react to their agitation and leaflets and to reply to them. It is



necessary to react in a popular and intelligible manner. Every article, every speech written and uttered by the Social-Democrats and reformists can furnish the Communist agitators and propagandists with material for their speeches against the Social-Democrats and Reformists. Only in this way can we expose Social-Democracy; without this it will be hardly possible to expose them. In exposing the Social-Democrats and the reformists you must not overlook the other parties and organisations which exercise or seek to gain influence over the working class (the Catholics, National-Socialists, etc.).

The Social-Democratic Parties in the different countries apply various methods in performing their rôle as the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie. In England, until the last elections, the Labour Party openly played its part while in the Government. As soon as it saw that the masses of the workers were turning away in disgust from its policy, that it was endangered from this side, it sacrificed its leaders and went into "opposition." In France, the Socialist Party has not participated in the Government since the war. Sometimes, on the eve of an election, it even votes in Parliament against this or that Bill when it is certain that the Government is assured of a majority without the Socialist votes. In reality, the French Socialist Party is a most devoted servant and pillar of bellicose French imperialism. It is hardly necessary to speak at all about the German Social-Democrats. They are past masters in the art of deceiving the masses and the most cunning Party in the Second International in manoeuvring.

The Communist Parties, like the Bolsheviks in Tsarist Russia, must anticipate the manoeuvres of the Social-Democrats and warn the masses against them. They must expose them whenever they succeed in carrying out their manoeuvres and deceive the workers and toilers. The Communist Parties, the red trade unions and all the mass revolutionary organisations, must tirelessly expose the Social-Democrats and the reformists, for unless the workers are freed from their influence the Communist Parties cannot win the majority of the working class, without which it will be impossible to fight successfully against the bourgeoisie. The Communist Parties must also carry on a vigorous and unrelenting struggle against the National-Socialists who take advantage of the treachery of the Social-Democrats and reformists as well as of the mistakes and weaknesses of the Communist Parties in order to extend their influence over the petty bourgeoisie and permeate the unemployed with the aid of their demagogic slogans, frequently even with the aid of Communist slogans.

#### 4. Unemployment.

Unemployment is rife. None but the Communist Party pays any attention to the unemployed. Nevertheless, even when it was possible to organise the unemployed, when it was easy to do this by championing the every-day interests of the unemployed, the Communist Parties failed to take advantage of the situation. They failed to achieve such organisation. There are not many Communists in the factories since most of them have been discharged. It is not easy to work in the factory. But why has the work not been organised among the unemployed, at the labour exchanges, in the lodging houses, in the bread and soup lines? There is an enormous number of members of the Party and of revolutionary trade union organisations among the unemployed; is it difficult to organise the work among these comrades? In Czecho-Slovakia and Poland the unemployed organisations succeeded in places in mobilising large masses and brought pressure to bear upon the municipalities, as a result of which, the latter were forced to issue grants to the unemployed. In America the unemployed receive no aid either from the State, or from the employers, and are forced to depend upon charity. Large numbers of them are being evicted from their homes. During 1930 and 1931, 352,469 families were evicted in New York alone. There is a vast field of activity for the revolutionary and Communist organisations, but they only take advantage of these conditions in a very slight degree. At one moment they set up an exclusive unemployed organisation, at another they spend all their time organising demonstrations and overlook the need for establishing kitchens for the unemployed, for organising a movement capable of preventing the evictions of the unemployed, demanding and securing benefits for the unemployed, etc., etc.

#### WHY THE COMMUNIST PARTIES AND REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNIONS LAG BEHIND THE REVOLUTIONARY LABOUR AND PEASANT MOVEMENTS.

I have tried to show the difference between the tactics, organisation, methods and content of work, and ultimate aims of the Bolsheviks and Social-Democrats, and I have also tried to show the causes of this difference. We, the workers on the E.C.C.I., sometimes hear arguments to the effect that the old Bolshevik experience does not apply to the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, especially in regard to methods of work in the factories. The experience of the past few years, however, has refuted this view. Where the Bolshevik methods of work have been applied, where flexible tactics have been applied in the work in the factories, they have yielded excellent

results. Does not the intensity of the struggle, the mass character of the labour and peasant movement in Poland and the leading rôle the Communist Party plays in this struggle, in this movement, reveal the superiority of Bolshevik methods over the Social-Democratic methods? You must remember that the Polish revolutionary proletariat, the former S.D.P. of Poland and Lithuania, now the Communist Party of Poland, in spite of the mistakes it committed, fought shoulder to shoulder with the Bolshevik Party of Russia. They adopted the Bolshevik methods of work; that is why they have not become isolated from the Polish proletariat despite the ruthless fascist terror that is raging in the country. But the Communist Parties, the red trade unions and the trade union opposition in the capitalist countries which have not yet freed themselves from Social-Democratic traditions, have not adopted, are not carrying out, or are carrying out poorly, the Bolshevik methods of work and forms of organisation, are not giving the work a Bolshevik content, are lagging behind the revolutionary labour movement, behind the revolutionary events and are unable to consolidate their growing political influence organisationally (for instance, we get four to five million votes and at the same time we fail to organise resistance to the employers' attack on wages). This lag will be inevitable until the Communist Parties, the red trade unions and the trade union opposition discard the Social-Democratic traditions and assimilate and apply the truly Bolshevik experience in every field of their political work and every-day activities.

#### TRAINING CADRES AND THE METHODS OF TEACHING IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY SCHOOLS.

The question of cadres is assuming tremendous importance for the Communist Parties, red trade unions and trade union opposition, in the present conditions. The International Communist Party Schools therefore play an important part in training revolutionary cadres.

The question of instruction in these Party Schools is of vital importance because the need for theoretically-trained cadres who combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience is very acute in the sections of the Communist International. This need has not diminished in recent years, but, on the contrary it has increased. We have not trained such cadres in sufficient numbers. The Communist Parties in the capitalist countries can obtain these cadres from the International Communist Party Schools. Some of these Party Schools have been in existence for some time now, but the Comintern has not yet received the cadres necessary for Communist work. To be sure, when the students of the International Communist Party Schools return to

their Parties upon graduating, they know, perhaps, quite well, the most important works of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and in some of these countries they even become Party leaders.

But what the Communist Parties have not yet received from the International Communist Party Schools are comrades capable of applying Marxism and Leninism to the local conditions, capable of organising and conducting mass work, and this is precisely what the Communist Parties are mainly in need of at the present time.

They have not been getting workers really capable of helping them to rebuild the Parties, the red trade unions and the trade union oppositions on a factory basis.

What are the causes of this? The causes are as follow: the students study Party structure which cannot be fully applied in their countries at the present time, but only after the capture of the power by the proletariat. But they even learn the Party structure of the C.P.S.U. superficially: they do not study with sufficient attention what they ought to study most, *viz.*, the methods of mass work, the mobilisation of the masses, the different approach to the different sections of the toilers, mass agitation, forms of organisation of mass agitation, the relations between the Communist fractions (especially in the lower mass non-Party organisations) and the respective cells and Party committees, the work of the factory Party cells and of the factory trade union committees, etc. They do not study and assimilate the experience of the period preceding the capture of the power by the working class, that is the experience of the Bolsheviks in the Tsarist days and in the Kerensky days from February to October.

Yet it is this experience which our Communist Parties need most.

It is this experience which contains elements of similarity with the situation in the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries at the present time. Of course there are also points of difference.

That is why I dealt with the difference between the position of the Bolshevik Party under the Tsar, and that of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries at the present time.

The fact that the Communist Parties do not get the kind of graduates they need from the International Party Schools proves that the instruction given is apparently not conducted with a view to the peculiarities of each individual Party, to its development, traditions and former customs.

The task of the International Communist Party Schools is to assist our Communist Parties to assimilate the experience of the Bolsheviks, both in Party organisation as well as in Party work as



a whole, and in such a way as to enable them to apply this experience to the conditions prevailing in their respective countries. The conditions in the various countries differ. Conditions in Germany differ very much from those in France, they differ very much from those in England and not less from those in the United States. In every country the labour movement has its own peculiar features, its own history and traditions, its peculiar forms of Party organisation and of labour organisations. When you are giving

instruction according to groups of countries you must bear this in mind. It should be stated that teachers can obtain the necessary material and facts concerning each country, and describing the conditions prevailing there, from the students who have taken part in the practical work of their Parties.

The International Communist Party Schools must help the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movement to train genuinely Bolshevik cadres.

## THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

By LEROI.

THE VIth Congress of the French Communist Party was held at St. Denis at the beginning of 1929, at a time when, after the stabilisation of the currency, production in France was developing above pre-war level, the mouthpieces of the bourgeoisie were singing hymns about the "inauguration of a prosperity policy in France," accompanied by proclamations by their lackeys, the Socialists and their satellites, the renegades, and the Trotskyists, on the exceptional position of France.

New factories were created, new metallurgic and coal trusts were formed, the same development took place in other branches of industry—above all, in the chemical and electrical industries. The number of blast furnaces in the metal industry increased from 131 in 1923 to 153 in 1928. The production of cast iron increased from 8,306,000 tons in 1927 to 9,387,000 in 1928, while the production in 1913 had not reached 5,207,000 tons. At the same time, export of cast iron and steel increased from 500,000 tons to 4,500,000 tons.

Mass unemployment had not yet appeared in France and French capitalism, on the contrary, searched in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and in other countries for skilled and unskilled labour.

In the U.S.S.R., the proletariat, led by the Communist Party, was only approaching the realisation of the first Five Year Plan, it had just begun . . . and the bourgeoisie with the Socialist "theoretician" at their head were still declaring the inevitable "failure" of the plan of Socialist construction.

The Communist Party of France, in this situation, was the only one that clearly foresaw the approach of the economic crisis and the consequences of the contradictions of capitalist

economy in France. It rightly emphasised at its VIth Congress that capitalist stabilisation signifies greater exploitation of the masses of the workers and, as a result, the growth of the class struggle, of which the first indications appeared in the development of the strike movement at this period; during the last four months of 1928, the number of strikers in France was equivalent to the average number of strikers for a whole year during the period from 1922-1927. It foresaw and pointed out the imminence of the danger of imperialist war and, above all, of military intervention in the Soviet Union. It attacked the bourgeois and Social-Democratic theories of the "exceptional position" of French capitalism energetically; these theories were echoed even by some of the Communists and in the ranks of the C.G.T.U.

The picture which the capitalist world and French imperialism in a crisis actually offers as opposed to the Soviet Union, the land of the victorious construction of Socialism, plainly justifies the perspectives and the political line traced by the Communist International and by the VIth Congress of the Party. The essential ingredients of the partial stabilisation of capitalism which correspond to the methods of plunder of Germany, and agree concerning the re-partition of spheres of interest in China, etc., are in great part breaking down. In the Far East, war has begun in fact, with the active support and inspiration of French imperialism, and the threat of aggression against the U.S.S.R. is very definite. The partial and precarious stabilisation of capitalism is nearing its end.

Despite the prattling about the exceptional prosperity of France, French imperialism has not escaped the fate of world imperialism. Entering

late into the crisis, it developed rapidly. The production of coal in 1931 (7 million tons) declined 8 per cent. at the end of the year in comparison with 1930; the production of cast-iron (8 million tons) declined 18 per cent. in comparison with 1930 and 24 per cent. in comparison with 1929. The production of steel (7,800,000 tons in 1931) declined 17 per cent. in comparison with 1930 and 19 per cent. in comparison with 1929. The decline was accelerated in January, 1932. The number of blast furnaces in action fell from 154 on the 31st of December, 1929, to 137 in December, 1930, and to 85 in January, 1932.

At the beginning of the year, a fifth of the French fleet was dismantled. The figures of export show a decline of 38 per cent. in value and of 16 per cent. in weight for imports, a decline of 30 per cent. in value and of 22 per cent in weight for exports in the month of January, 1932, in comparison with 1931.

The number of totally unemployed reached 1,615,000 on the first of February, as against 1,474,000 on the first of January, 1932. There was at this time 6,198,500 partially employed (against the 5,676,000 in January). Of this number, about 1,277,000 workers only work four days and less per week.

The economic crisis has struck the French colonies more severely, and this fact aggravated, in turn, the crisis in France. The development of the agrarian crisis has quickened. A constant diminution of the sown area confirms this fact.

French imperialism succeeded in profiting from her delay in the development of the crisis, by using the difficulties of the countries, affected more rapidly by the crisis, to advantage. It used financial pressure as its means, credits whose sum total reached more than 10,000 million francs, mainly to the countries of Central Europe and the Orient. The orientation of these credits is clearly imperialistic and military. The credits were placed, above all, with the countries bordering the Soviet Union and are for the purpose of assuring for French imperialism strategic, decisive industrial positions. Meanwhile most of these countries are so weak from a financial and economic point of view that the French credits constitute not only the principal support of their existence but also French imperialism is obliged to constantly extend new credits to these countries and to risk part of the credits formerly granted, in order to avoid financial bankruptcy. By promising these credits, by withdrawing or maintaining short term investments, French imperialism has been able to obtain certain advantages and relatively reinforce her positions. This strengthening implies, above all, the strengthening of the exploitation of the peoples enslaved by the Treaty of Versailles and especially the

increase of the threat of intervention against the Soviet Union.

A great part of the deliberations of the VIIth Congress were devoted to the examination of the rôle of champion of anti-Soviet aggression played by French imperialism and of the tasks which devolve upon the C.P. of France. In the political reports of the Central Committee, in the report of Comrade Marty on the struggle against imperialist war, on the organisational and trade union tasks, during the whole discussion, the question of imperialist war begun in China, the imminence of an anti-Soviet aggression and imperialist aggression, the struggle against French imperialism, were placed in the foreground.

Why did French imperialism become the organiser of military intervention against the Soviet Union? The Congress replied to this question:

1. France, as a great imperialist country, is interested in the conquests of new markets, consequently, in the destruction of the Soviet power, and the re-organisation of Russia on an imperialist basis.

2. The Soviet Union is the crumbling part of the Versailles edifice on which French imperialism rests.

3. The direct contact of the Soviet Union with the neighbouring countries and the crisis developed in these countries offer a solid base for the shining example of Bolshevism in the vassal countries of France, which are defending the bases of the Versailles system in eastern Europe.

4. The existence of the Soviet Union, the successful construction of the first Five Year Plan and the preparation of the second Five Year Plan, the national policy of the Soviet power is a factor of the utmost importance in the revolutionary process in the capitalist countries as well as in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The Congress denounced the manifestations of French imperialism in its attitude of systematic provocation and of war with regard to the Soviet Union. The action of the Industrial Party showed how French imperialism had organised sabotage and espionage with a view to intervention against the Soviet Union, the actions of the Menshevik Party have also shown the direct relations of its agents of counter-revolution with French imperialism. Finally, the recent provocations in Moscow, the attempts at assassination by the Czech diplomat, Vanek, who was revealed as an agent of Czecho-Slovakia, inspired by French imperialism, and the attempt of Stern-Vassilief upon the life of the consul, Twardowski, were likewise directed from Paris.

The Congress, faced with the heavy responsibility resting upon the French proletariat and its



revolutionary vanguard, was able to show that the Party had led the struggle against the danger of imperialist war during the entire period since the Congress at St. Denis. If the results of this struggle are not yet entirely satisfactory, the Party has had certain success in this quarter, at least. On the first of August, 1929, a notable demonstration against war took place. Since the beginning of the war in the Far East the Party has mobilised the proletariat for the defence of the Soviet Union. It is the only Party which denounces the danger of imperialist war and exposes the pacifist phrases of the Social-Democracy and the activities of imperialist politics in the factories, among the masses, through its press, leaflets, posters, factory newspapers and the Chamber tribune. It is this work which has won the sympathies of the workers, and even of the Socialist Party. The secretary of the Socialist section of St. Ouen wrote: "You alone draw the attention of the workers to the war."

The national day, February 4th, prepared as a demonstration for the economic demands of employed and unemployed workers, was transformed into a demonstration against imperialist war. The Party and the C.G.T.U. succeeded in drawing the attention of the large masses of workers to the danger of war. The increasing activity of the workers in the exposure of war manufacture, the protest strike of the dockers at Dunkerque, the increasing demonstrations in front of factories are the best proofs of it.

In the discussion on the reports, the delegates exposed the war preparations in all parts of France and brought facts forward showing the feverish preparations being made by French imperialism, its ever more active participation in the war already begun in China.

The Congress was unanimous in recognising that the work which must be the centre point of the attention of the whole Party, from now on, is systematic work against the imperialist war, the greatest efforts must be brought to bear, above all, in the factories, the rail stations and the ports. The Congress called upon the Party to struggle against the pacifist deceits of Social-Fascism, a most active factor in the preparation of the imperialist war and, more particularly, of military intervention against the U.S.S.R. By decision of the Congress, the last week in the month of March was proclaimed anti-war fighting week. The Party sessions have therefore become the practical point of departure in the reinforcement of Party action against the war.

The Congress emphasised at the same time the weaknesses of Party work against French imperialism, due above all to an under-estimation

of the danger of imperialist war and the imminence of military intervention in the Soviet Union.

After emphasising the necessity of concentrating forces against the pacifist lies of the Social-Fascists in order to expose them, and resolutely condemning the errors committed by the propaganda of pacifist slogans, and other means; by the participation of members of the Party in a pacifist committee of radicals and Socialists (at Thiers), the Congress proceeded from the list of general considerations on the anti-war work to ask that the delegates render account of the work done in their regions, districts and cells. "Comrades of the Lyons district, what work has been done in Creusot?" asked the reporter. "Comrades of the North, what work is being done with the Khulmans of the Madeleine?" "Comrades of the Federation of Sous-Sol, what are you doing in the by-product works which are becoming more and more numerous in the mining valleys?"

With a unanimity which characterised the Congress, tasks were assigned in the struggle against imperialist war and military intervention in the U.S.S.R. "The realisation of these tasks implies the vigorous exposure of each action of preparation for war by French imperialism, energetic action against imperialist intervention in China, for the active support of the Chinese Soviets, for the evacuation of Indo-China and of all the colonies suppressed by French imperialism, for the mobilisation of the masses for active defence of the Soviet Union. It implies the popularisation of the success of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, in the construction of Socialism, in order to render the class character of the anti-Soviet war in preparation clearer."

The sessions of the Party Congress have perfected the ideological arsenal of the Party for the struggle against imperialist war and the defence of the U.S.S.R. It is the rôle of the Party to control and orientate the realisation of this task for which the French proletariat and its advance guard bears a particularly heavy responsibility.

The Congress declared that the battle for defence of immediate demands, strikes and activities of the unemployed must not be separated from the struggle against war.

In the report on the tasks of the Party in the economic struggles, Comrade Frachon depicted the characteristics of the offensive of the French bourgeoisie against the working class. For the past year, with the direct support of the Social-Democracy and the reformist bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie has succeeded in imposing reductions in wages which range from 15 per cent to 20 per

cent., reaching sometimes, as is the case in the textile factory of l'Isère, 50 per cent. The railway workers are threatened with a reduction in wages. Already the report Fournier testified that the effort to eliminate waste resulted in the reduction of the total personnel of the railways from 700,000 to 500,000 with a reduction in expenses of 3 thousand million francs by half per year. They are preparing for a reduction in the personnel of 80,000 office employees. But at the same time, they are conducting a campaign for a reduction in the wages of the railway workers. To the direct measures against the working class, to the various forms of exploitation is added spoliation by means of the policy of prices and customs tariffs.

The Congress marked the rôle played in this offensive by the Social-Democracy and the C.G.T. They support each attack of the boss on the standard of living of the workers. At first, they began by spreading the "theory" of the passivity of the masses of workers. Their agents in the midst of the syndicalist movement, the minority and the Trotskists have faithfully popularised these theories, proposing the suspension of the class struggle for 40 years (Chambelland). On the basis of the facts of these latter years, the Congress has unanimously rejected these conceptions and testified to the increasing resistance of the French proletariat to the capitalist attacks. The struggle against the former reductions in wages by application of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic law on social insurance has drawn more than 200,000 workers into strikes. 3,000 textile workers of Cours struck for three months, liquidating the reformist union. In March, 1931, approximately 30,000 to 40,000 miners, under the leadership of the C.G.T.U., struck against a lowering of wages. In the summer of 1931, for 11 weeks, 125,000 workers, men and women, of the textile industry led the struggle. 500 strikers in Sedan under the direction of the C.G.T.U., forced the bosses to withdraw a reduction of wages for 5,000 workers. In spite of the efforts of reformist officials, 8,000 workers of the shoe factory at Fougères have been on strike against wage reductions since February, 1932. In Vienne, 1,500 male and female workers of the textile factory, Etablissements Reunie began a strike which has lasted six weeks. The workers' movement at the Renault establishment where several thousands are leading the struggle in the factory in a state of siege, and the activities in other metal factories in Paris, signify the approach of greater struggles in the metal industry.

The activities of the agricultural workers (the strike of Coursan) show that the radicalisation of

the masses is drawing the agricultural proletariat in as well. In all these strikes, above all in the course of the last months, one sees not only the more active participation of the most exploited sections of the proletariat (women, young girls, immigrant workers) but particularly a great increase in the activity of the unemployed. The unemployed workers supported the movement of Chez Renault; at the time of the strike at Vienne, there were 2,000 unemployed workers who joined the movement on the spot. The workers often come out on strike, despite the fact that they have been working only two and three days a week for a considerable time (Pont de l'Arche, Vienne).

The Congress was able to show improved activity in the organisations of the C.G.T.U. in several strikes during past months.

Our organisation was at the head of the movement of Chez Renault, at Vienne, they succeeded in assuming the direction of the strike at the Pont de l'Arche. Thanks to a better application of revolutionary tactics in the strikes and improved work in the united front, several strikes of the latter period have been ended successfully. The fact that most of the strikes led by the C.G.T.U. in the month of February, 1932 (14 strikes of 26) were victorious, refutes the reformist theory of the impossibility of successful struggles at a time of crisis most convincingly.

Apart from certain improvements in the general work of the Communists in the ranks of the revolutionary union, the Congress noted the weaknesses which still remain predominant in this domain. If the organisations of the C.G.T.U. have succeeded in leading certain strikes and struggles, they have not yet succeeded in exposing the treason of the reformists in the economic struggles. The recent big strikes in France and movements for demands are still being conducted under the leadership of the reformists and they end in defeat because of this. In general we only lead the small movements and not those in basic industries. The principal cause of the weaknesses of the Party in this field is the underestimation of the readiness of the masses for struggle by the workers in our ranks, an underestimation which has not yet been resolutely combatted. The secretary of the committee of the Givors section did not believe there was a possibility of declaring a strike in Vienne, while the masses of textile workers already decided to come out on strike the following day.

Another cause of the backwardness of the Party in economic struggles is the fact that certain sectarian tendencies among the militant elements prevent the Party from forming closer ties with the working masses who are still under the influence of the reformists, and from applying



the united front methods. These sectarian tendencies prevented the C.G.T.U. from taking a firm lead of the extensive movement for trade union unity in the beginning of 1931, and they are the principal cause of the failure to actually place the question of trade union unity in the class struggle in the centre of attention in the work of the Communists in the unions. These tendencies have been at the bottom of the errors made in the various movements, for example in the movement of the miners at the beginning of 1932, when our militant members launched the slogan of the boycott of the referendum organised by the reformists, instead of participating in the referendum and allying themselves with the reformist workers, thus forming united front organisations with them to expose the treason of the officials and lead the miners in the struggle.

That is why the Congress emphasised the fact so forcibly that the application of the "united front" tactics from below, for the mustering and organising of all the proletarians in the enterprises around and under the direction of the Communist Party, is the weapon necessary to the Party for the preparation, the spreading and the victorious unfurling of the workers' struggles for decisive battles for power." It repelled "in a categorical fashion all attempts at agreement from above between the organisations of the Communist Party and the S.F.I.O. The proposals for a united front made to the union organisations of the reformists or others must be subordinate to work among the masses."

In spite of certain success obtained in recruiting work, in the daily work in the unions and the direction of the districts, a real turn has not yet been made. The work of our trade union organisations has not yet been concentrated in the factories. The Congress emphasised the necessity for the creation of trade union sections in the enterprises as one of the indispensable conditions for the spreading of the economic struggle under revolutionary leadership. To attain success in the transformation of the revolutionary union organisations on the base of factory sections, the Party must fight the anarchist-sindicalist survivals, the distrust of organisation, the orientation to spontaneity of mass movements and the insufficiently detailed preparations for economic movements.

The Congress approached the discussion on the increased struggle against the social democracy and emphasised the fact that "the effective struggle against French imperialism demands the strengthening of the attack against the social democracy, to expose, isolate and defeat the socialist party, the chief social support of the bourgeoisie." In emphasising the importance of

the next election campaign, the Congress confirmed the slogan of "class against class" verified in the course of all the elections since 1928. "The bitter and systematic struggle against the social democracy will not be realised if the Party does not turn its face in its entirety, in a decisive fashion, towards the socialist workers, and the masses influenced by the social democracy, and win over each socialist worker, assuring the constant use of the united front as a basis."

If the discussion on these questions did not show any resistance to the tactic of "class against class," it would not be correct to affirm that the correct application of this tactic in the Party is already assured. The tendencies toward capitulation to the social democracy still exist, but the sectarian tendencies have been insufficiently resisted. In drawing up the balance sheet of activity of the Party during recent years, the Congress noted the almost complete abandonment of united front work. A great many of our militant members do not understand that the correct application of the "class against class" tactics demands a bitter struggle against the social democracy not only during election periods, but also particularly daily work in the factories, among the unemployed, to expose the socialist party and the C.G.T., and to win over the socialist workers by the united front policy, under the direction of the Communist Party.

The Congress forcibly emphasised the slackness of the Party in the field of organisation. The tasks which face the Party; action against the imperialist war, for the defence of the Soviet Union, the mobilisation of the masses against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the organisation and leadership of the economic struggles, the struggle against the principal social support of the bourgeoisie—the social democracy—demand that the centre of activity of the Party be carried into the factories. The report of Comrade Duclos stated, meanwhile, that among the 2,387 cells of the Party, only 490 were factory cells. But even these latter direct their efforts toward the factories in a very weak manner. One of the principal tasks of the Party is to learn how to work in the factories. To-day the activity of the factory groups is very inadequate. For the 490 sections there were only 140 factory papers.

The Congress decided to concentrate efforts particularly in the most important industrial centres of the following regions: Paris region, Northern, Eastern, Lyonese, Marseilles, Alsace-Lorraine, and to instruct the Party leaders to devote the greatest efforts to these districts.

The first results obtained in the course of preparations for the Congress, in the field of recruiting (about 4,000 new members of the Party,

15,000 new members in the C.G.T.U., a certain strengthening of the Young Communist League), indicate the greatest possibilities for our Party. To clinch and develop these results, the Congress decided upon the political, organic and ideological reinforcement of the Party and the augmentation of its results; the improvement of the work in the Party committees by every measure possible, the improvement of the social composition of the organisation and the stabilisation of its results. The condition of the Party organisation demands far greater collective work of all the committees and organs of the Party, the brightening of the interior life, the practice of democratic centralisation. Special attention must be devoted to the improvement, the control, the development and circulation of "L'Humanité" as well as the provincial press. The "Cahiers du Bolchévisme" ("Bolshevik Notes") must become an organ of the elaboration and deepening of the questions of principle placed before the Party. Systematic work for the formation of Bolshevik cadres is one of the most important tasks.

The report and the discussion on the question of organisation have proved that a decisive strengthening of the organisational work is an indispensable condition for the realisation of the tasks which face the Party. If the Congress could list the weaknesses in the several regions of work, without doubt the backwardness in the organisational field (Party organisation, union organisation, organisation of struggles) would be seen to require the greatest efforts of the Party and its directives.

The peasant question, the question of Alsace-Lorraine and the colonial problem have been likewise under discussion in the Congress, which had to recognise the insufficient support of the national revolutionary movement in the colonies, and the indifference with regard to the national liberation movement in Alsace-Lorraine. The discussion on the problems of work among the immigrant workers has shown the need for strengthening the struggle against chauvinism and nationalistic provocations by the bourgeoisie and the socialists.

The Congress, and even before the Congress, the whole of the Party, unanimously condemned the conspirative and sectarian group of Barbe-Lozeray. This group, a particularly outstanding expression of the sectarian and mechanical practices of the Party, has very greatly contributed to the development of opportunistic tendencies, through the weakening of the struggle of the Party against opportunistic deviations. The struggle against the attitude and practice of this group demands the attention and systematic work of the whole Party.

The Congress observed a certain strengthening of the Party in that direction and it has thus

become a point of departure for better work and more rapid development of the Party. The events which occurred on the eve of and during the Congress, the strikes at Sedan, Vienne and the Pont de l'Arche under the leadership of the Party, and the revolutionary unions, the great demonstrations on the occasions of the funeral services of Camelinat and the murdered unemployed worker, Fritsch, the first results obtained in the recruiting campaign of the Party, are proof that objective conditions are favourable for the reduction and even removal of the backwardness of the Party in the developing situation. The task of the new Central Committee, elected largely by newly recruited militants, not forming part of the old leadership of the Party, will be to carry the decisions of the Congress among the Party members.

This task, although very urgent, has not yet been accomplished. Two months after the Congress, the decisions and resolutions are not yet known to some members of the Party. The leadership must accomplish this elementary work without delay to acquaint the Party with the objectives of the Congress.

"The French Communist Party will know how to lead the struggle on the two fronts with energy, against right opportunism and sectarianism with leftist phraseology, the other extreme of right opportunism.

"It will fight the survivals of social democracy and anarcho-syndicalism in its midst bitterly, to prevent their penetration and to repel all conceptions or theories hostile to Bolshevik outlook.

"It will vigorously repulse the slightest attempts at revision of the Party line and of the C.I., at the weakening of the struggle against the social democracy; it will line up against all conciliatory tendencies with regard to right and left deviations.

"The Party will realise its tasks, it will win over the majority of the working class, if it is well acquainted with the spirit and sentiment of the masses, if it knows how to utilise the least manifestation of their discontentment, if it launches in every situation appropriate slogans, if it directs the daily struggles for immediate demands effectively, if it knows how to link these struggles with the general movement against imperialist war, for the defence of the Soviet Union, for the support of the revolutionary movement in Europe and of the liberation movement of the colonial peoples oppressed by French imperialism. By mobilising the working masses, assuring the hegemony of the proletariat, for a bitter and resolute struggle against the dictatorship of the French bourgeoisie and against the social democracy, the French Communist Party will lead them in the decisive struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat."



# THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE POLICY OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN INDIA.

By VALIA.

## I.

### *The Economic Crisis and the Situation of the Toiling Masses.*

**T**HE British imperialists have lately begun to talk a great deal about signs of recovery from the economic crisis being observable in Britain and particularly in India.

The Minister for India, Hoare, speaking in Parliament, declared:

"With regard to the economic situation, he doubted whether it was always realised how great had been the economic crisis through which India had been passing. India was through the worst of the crisis and was in a better position to take advantage of a general recovery than almost any other country in the world." ("Times," March 1st, 1932).

The British imperialists, with Hoare at their head, substantiate their statements by such arguments as that India has "paid out" her debt of 15 million pounds sterling to the British Treasury, that the prices of raw materials have slightly increased, that the value of securities and imports into India have gone up.

The real facts, however, go to show not only that the crisis is further sharpening, but that under the burden of the feudal and imperialist system of exploitation in colonial India, the structural crisis of the entire economy, which is now interweaving with the world crisis, has reduced the country to the lowest depths of destitution and misery. We shall cite a few facts in proof of our thesis.

### *Foreign Trade.*

During the first ten months of 1929-30 the value of the exports amounted to 265 crore rupees,\* while the exports for the corresponding period of 1930-31 amounted to 135 crore rupees. Imports for the same period declined from 201 to 105 crore rupees. In some cases the decline was even more striking: the import of cotton goods dropped from 49.7 to 15.9 crore rupees, and the export of jute products, from 62.9 to 20.9 crore rupees.

The figures relating to the foreign trade turnover for the last few months indicate a further decrease. In December, 1931, exports and imports amounted to 24.85 lakh rupees,† compared with 24.13 lakh rupees in January, 1932 (including the export of gold) and 22.61 lakh rupees in February.

Thus the figures of foreign trade confirm that the crisis in India, which is a raw-material exporting country, far from weakening, is displaying a tendency towards further intensification. The fall of the foreign trade has been accompanied by a sharp decline in the domestic trade. A certain indication of this is provided by the deficit of the railways. In 1931, this deficit amounted to seven million pounds sterling, despite the sharp rise of freight rates. During the same year the passenger traffic dropped by 15 per cent.

If we take the amount of freight carried per mile of railway in 1923-24 as 100, then that for 1926-27 is equal to 96.1 and that for 1929-30 to 87.7.

### *Fall of Prices.*

The official statistics of the wholesale price index contain the following figures, the index for 1914 being taken as 100:—

Year	Raw Cotton	Cotton Goods	All Goods
1918	...	309	298
1921	...	143	280
1924	...	272	229
1927	...	167	159
1929	...	146	160
1930	...	91	139
1931	...	83	123

In considering this table it is necessary to remember that British imperialism carried out various manipulations with the quotation of the rupee in order to strengthen the non-equivalent exchange, i.e., to despoil the peasants and workers of the country. Besides, in India the divergency between wholesale and retail prices, or to be more exact, between the wholesale prices and those at which the peasants sell their produce, has reached greater proportions than anywhere else in the world, and the official figures therefore considerably diminish the real extent of the robbery of the peasant masses.

The official table quoted above indicates, firstly, that in 1931 the decline in prices was particularly drastic; secondly, that this price decline greatly exceeds the decline which took place during the crisis of 1920-21, and, thirdly, that the prices of raw materials dropped far more than the prices of manufactured products, including cotton goods, so that the peasantry was particularly affected.

An even more striking picture of the fall of prices and of the ruin of the peasantry is provided by the retail prices. The weekly, *Journal*, "Makhrat," contains the following data: In

\* A crore rupee is equal to 750,000 pounds sterling.

† A lakh rupee is equal to 7,500 pounds sterling.

December, 1929, a peasant gave for one rupee, seven seers\* of wheat or five and a quarter seers of rice, or 10.25 seers of barley, while in May, 1931, he had to give for one rupee 13 seers of wheat, or 9.3 seers of rice, or 25.05 seers of barley.

The Coalowners' Association report contains the following figures: In 1930 a peasant gave for one rupee five-six seers of rice, in 1931, 16 seers of rice ("Capital," January 7th, 1932). These figures confirm the well-known fact of the unheard-of ruination of the peasantry, who are unable to retain for their own use even a starvation ration, or to maintain their farms which are at the lowest possible state of degradation as it is.

The crisis results in a reduction of the acreage planted with industrial crops. The jute acreage, according to a number of newspapers, has been reduced to half. The reduction of the cotton acreage has been relatively small. In 1930-31, the cotton acreage amounted to 23,014,000 acres compared with 22,350,000 acres in 1931-32 ("Capital," of January 7th, 1932). Some of the industrial crops are being replaced by the ruined peasants by grain crops. "Commerce," of July 26th, states that the total cultivated acreage has been reduced as follows:—

Year	Acreage
1926-27 ... ..	226,012,867 acres
1927-27 ... ..	226,172,000 "
1928-29 ... ..	223,862,000 "

The fluctuations of prices during the recent months in connection with the dropping of the gold standard, the depreciation of the rupee and the speculation caused by the war in the Far East, in consequence of the increase of the demand for cotton, rice, etc., do not affect our general conclusions. The Indian capitalists still cherish the hope for a great war which will benefit them in the same way as did the war of 1914-18.

Industry.

Under the influence of the crisis all industries, with the exception of the cotton industry, have reduced operations. A particularly sharp drop of production has been recorded in the jute industry working on export. The Tata works have also drastically curtailed their output in consequence of the reduction of railway construction operations and the decline of the export of iron, especially to Japan.

The few orders received in connection with the war have not altered the general situation. The slight growth of the cotton industry (and the erection of several new small cotton mills) connected with the boycott of the British goods does not change the general picture of the growing crisis.

\* A seer is equal to one pound.

The production of cotton goods has developed as follows according to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce:—

Year	Yarn in million pounds	Cotton Fabrics in million yards
1927-28 ... ..	809	2,357
1928-29 ... ..	648	1,893
1929-30 ... ..	833	2,419
1930-31 ... ..	867	2,561
1931 (April-June)	312	969

The increase for three years was extremely negligible (slightly exceeding the output for 1927-28) compared with the general drop of the import of cotton goods for the same years, as shown by the following figures:—

Import of Cotton Goods.

Year	Million yards
1929 ... ..	1,910
1930 ... ..	1,253
1931 ... ..	742

Thus the cotton industry succeeded only in an insignificant degree in utilising the reduction of the import of cotton goods, and this only due to the boycott movement. The reason is clear: it consists in the monstrous ruination of the masses and the constant curtailment of the home market.

To illustrate the above we shall cite the following data from an editorial of the "Bombay Chronicle" of December 23rd, 1931:—

"The per capita consumption of cotton goods decreased from 13.5 yards in 1913 to 12 yards in 1930."

If we take the consumption of the toiling masses alone, it declined, according to the "Bombay Chronicle," from eight yards in 1913 to three yards in 1930. Anyone in the least acquainted with the situation in India knows that these figures, far from being exaggerated, do not even give a full picture of the speedy impoverishment and unprecedented plight of the toiling masses.

The contraction of the home market (and the force of the boycott of the British goods) may be judged to a certain extent by the value of the average import of British goods per head of population. The following is taken from "Capital," of April 7th:—

1924 ... ..	5 shillings 8 pence
1930 ... ..	3 "
1931 ... ..	1 " 10 "

Depreciation of Money and the Drain of Gold.

The British imperialists utilise the money and finance system, as well as the entire State machinery, not only for the purpose of securing a



monopoly of the exploitation of the Indian masses but also in order to extort by non-economic compulsion an additional share of colonial super-profit. The whole history of the despoliation of the Indian people strikingly confirms this. The latest development, the gold drain, follows the same line. British imperialism, by depreciating the rupee and dropping the gold standard, cut down, at one blow, the wages of the workers by more than 30 per cent., reinforcing, at the same time, its monetary policy by a tremendous increase of taxation. It has forced the toiling masses (including the middle peasants) to throw upon the market their miserable savings in the form of gold and silver trinkets. The price of the rupee dropped from 16 to 11 annas.\* The slight rise of prices caused by this, as well as by the war speculation, did not compensate the robbery of the masses resulting from the depreciation of the rupee. In February and March the prices again dropped and they are now below those which prevailed before the abolition of the gold standard.

The ruined toiling masses of the population, fearing death by starvation and anxious to preserve the land, etc., were forced to throw upon the market at reduced prices (compared with the world price) their gold and silver trinkets (in India, where there is no regularly functioning banking and savings bank system and where the semi-feudal system of usury still exists, these trinkets at present represent the only popular form of small savings, "sanctified" in addition by various customs and religious traditions). The colonial peasantry generally sells its agricultural produce at prices far below the world prices. This constitutes a manifestation of the non-equivalent exchange between the colonial and the imperialist countries. It has found its reflection also in the fact that the prices of industrial products declined far less than those of the raw materials produced by the colonial peasantry, who are oppressed by the imperialist and semi-feudal system, vigorously supported by the colonial bourgeoisie.

The selling of gold articles which has become known as "distress gold," is characteristic not only of India, but is being observed also in Indonesia and in a number of other colonial countries. This has been admitted by the Indian bourgeois economists and even by the British imperialists.

The re-sale of this gold brings high profits to the Indian speculators and big usurers and benefits British imperialism as well. The export of gold from India from September 26th, 1931, to February 27th, 1932, amounted to 513 million rupees. By this gold, which is being pumped out of India,

the British imperialists hope to pay their debt of 80 million pounds sterling which they owe to the United States and France. While issuing paper rupees (kept at par artificially by means of direct Governmental pressure), that is, while resorting to the printing press, the Anglo-Indian Government is buying up gold, exporting it to England and exchanging for paper pounds which it then imports to India, paying the "debts" (!) of the Anglo-Indian Government to the Bank of England with them, thus essentially again robbing the Indian people.

In this way the Anglo-Indian Government has paid out 15 million pounds sterling to London, following this up by the impudent statement, made through the mouth of the Minister for India, that this indicates the beginning of a recovery in India.

#### *India.*

The Indian imperialists seek to represent the gold drain as a normal phenomenon, consisting of an attempt by the Indian business men, rajahs, etc., to take advantage of the difference in the price of gold. The Indian bourgeoisie are forced to admit that the gold is being obtained at the price of the ruination of the toiling masses, but this does not worry them. The Indian bourgeoisie is concerned not with the interests of the toiling masses, but only with stopping the gold drain from the country and utilising the gold for the creation of a Reserve Bank of India, in the interests of the exploiting classes of India. At a conference of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce ("Hindustan Times") held on March 28th, Mr. Fhali demanded that the Government should collect for the Reserve Bank 100 crore rupees and buy up "distress gold" to the amount of 56 crore rupees at least. The Indian bourgeoisie demands protection of its interests. The position of the National Congress on the gold question furnishes added proof that the bourgeois National Congress is opposed to the people.

The impoverishment of the masses and the gold drain are directly connected with an increase of taxation and indebtedness of the workers, peasants and the city poor. To illustrate the burden of taxation we shall quote the following figures:—

In 1929-30 the taxes from 201 crores of imports amounted to 33 crore rupees.

In 1930-31 the taxes from 105 crores of imports amounted to 21 crore rupees.

Here we see a considerable increase of the custom duties. During the same year of 1931 freight rates were increased by at least 15 per cent., and at the same time the tax on salt, kerosine, etc., was also raised. The lowest gross income from which income tax was collected

\* One rupee is equal to 16 annas; one anna is equal to about two cents.

amounted to 2,000 rupees in 1930 and was reduced to 1,000 rupees in 1931, which means that a vast number of clerks, handicraftsmen, etc., were brought under the action of direct taxes. In addition, the old taxes were increased. Not content with this the imperialists are preparing to introduce new indirect taxes upon food and articles of general consumption.

Despite the enormous growth of taxation, the budget deficit of 1931 amounted to 15.5 crore rupees, plus the deficit of the different provinces, etc., etc. The deficit grows, the taxes soar, poverty increases, railway construction work has come to a practical standstill, trade is stagnant, production declines, yet the expenditure on the police, army, prisons and the entire machinery for the enslavement of the Indian people are being increased. *All this testifies to a further contraction of the home market and a further aggravation of the economic crisis in India.*

In this connection it is necessary to note that those Indian Communists who at the end of 1930 predicted the coming of a "boom" were cruelly mistaken. The methodological root of their mistake lay in the fact that instead of taking the economy (and the tendencies of its development) of the country as a whole, and considering its inter-effect upon the world market, they mistook the superficial slight improvement in the cotton industry caused by the boycott of the British goods, for an all-determining factor, failing to distinguish the temporary, superficial phenomena from the deep, basic tendencies of economic and political development.

#### *Impoverishment of the Toiling Masses.*

The weekly "Makhrat" notes that out of every 16 annas (16 annas = 1 rupee) of value of his produce, the peasant of the United Provinces has lost 11 annas through the depreciation of the rupee. This constitutes about 2/3. But the Government has granted to him temporary tax exemptions to the amount of two annas seven pice.\*

A commission of the United Provinces Government has calculated that the indebtedness of the peasantry in the province has now reached 129 crore rupees.

The report of the local committee of the National Congress points out that while prices have declined 52 per cent., completely ruining the tenant farmers, the Government reduced the tax by 6 per cent. and the landlords provisionally reduced the rent by 7 per cent. Thus, in 1931 the destitute peasantry must pay even higher taxes, rents and interest rates, than in past years. The Minister for India, Hoare, stated in Parlia-

ment on March 1st that owing to the reduction of agricultural prices the indebtedness of many peasants had grown by 70 per cent. Under these conditions the insignificant concessions made by the imperialists could not help the peasantry, arrest the development of the crisis, or stop the further growth of the agrarian movement caused by it.

The spontaneous movement in favour of refusing to pay rent, debts and taxes thus rests upon a solid economic base. Refusals to pay debts have become so frequent that the total sum of usurious capital circulating in the United Provinces has drastically declined. The commission of the United Provinces Government says in its report:—

Capital used for loan purposes now constitutes only between one half and one quarter of the sum accessible for credit before the outbreak of the crisis.

In a number of districts in the country starvation conditions prevail. Many cases are on record of children being sold. Never has the position of the peasantry been so grave as at present. The sale of farms under the hammer for arrears has assumed mass proportions.

The newspaper "Hindi" reports that in a certain district more than 300 peasants deserted their farms owing to inability to pay debts and taxes. Similar reports are published more and more frequently together with reports of forcible eviction for non-payment of debts, taxes and rent. Lately even the lands of the small landlords have begun to be sold for arrears. Reports to this effect are coming in from Bengal, partly from the Madras Presidency and elsewhere.

The situation of the workers is going from bad to worse. There are numerous facts to show that the pressure of the employers and Government upon the miserable living standards of the Indian proletariat is growing all the time. As an illustration we shall quote various reports from bourgeois sources which are far from interested in describing the situation worse than it actually is.

"Capital," of January 7th, reports that the miners' wages in 1931 were cut by 33 per cent. The average wages of a miner were reduced from nine to six annas per day. The wages of the jute mill workers dropped to one rupee ten annas per week (we take this from "Liberty," where a report is given on the wages of the workers of the Ristra jute mill); the wages of the workers in the cotton industry have declined. The official report states that the wages of the workers in the gold mines of Mysore are so miserable that they are unable to spend more than two annas per day on their family, thus being 20-30 per cent.

\* 1 anna = 4 pice.



below the minimum spent for the maintenance of criminals in prison. The wages of the rice mill workers in Calcutta were cut in two instalments from eight annas to four annas per day, the working day being 12 hours, etc.

In Bombay alone there are upward of 70,000 unemployed, while the railways have recently discharged more than 50,000 workers. An excess of 20,000 railwaymen are now working on short time, and the same applies to all the jute mills. During 1931, more than 75,000 jute workers were thrown on the street.

In Bombay the short working week in the railway shops means, according to the data of the reformist trade unions, a 40 per cent. reduction in the wages.

The intensification of labour is growing, the textile workers being forced to operate a larger number of spindles and looms per person. The wage cuts and the reduction of employment have affected the coal industry, the Tata iron works, the plantation workers. On January 1st the Government effected a 10 per cent. wage cut among the railwaymen at one blow and began to enforce a 10 per cent. reduction of the salaries paid to all the Government employees, including the postal workers. At the same time the municipal taxes, and services such as electricity, tram fares, railway fares, the excise tax and house rent, are all rising. Thus, the Tata Co. raised the rent in its houses by 50 per cent. The direct and indirect taxes are growing, the food prices display a rising tendency, the depreciation of the rupee has sharply reduced wages, etc., etc.

The unemployed receive no benefits and the workers' indebtedness grows. The short working week is accompanied by a lengthening of the working day. All this on the background of the surviving slave system which we have repeatedly described in the press: a 12-14 hour working day, fines, the payment of wages once per month, dependence upon the jobbers and usurers, total disfranchisement, etc., etc.

The starvation among the masses gives rise to constant epidemics and a high death rate. According to the investigation of the Indian doctors, about one million people die annually from tuberculosis alone and the average length of life in India during the last few years has dropped from 25 to 22 years (Putna, the "Indian Nation," February 15th).

Mr. Brockway, the representative of the Independent Labour Party, the pseudo-labour imperialist party which specialises in duping the working masses, was forced to admit in his book, "The Indian Crisis," that "the average length of life in India declined from 30.75 years in 1881 to 23.5 years at the present time" (page 19). He

is also forced to admit the slavish, plunderous, robber character of British imperialism.

Thus the growing crisis and the increasing exploitation on the part of the imperialists, landlords, usurers and Indian capitalists result in unprecedented destitution and distress among the toiling masses, a steady contraction of the home market, an increase of starvation and mortality, and a growth of the hatred of the awakening working and peasant masses for the existing system of oppression, hunger and slavery.

This gives rise to keen disappointment with the treacherous policy of the National Congress. Ever-growing masses of workers, peasants and city poor are beginning to desert the bourgeois National Congress and take up the revolutionary programme of struggle for their national and social emancipation.

## II.

### *The Policy of British Imperialism.*

The tendencies of the development of foreign trade in India during the past years indicate a steady decline of the share of Great Britain. Compared with 1930 England's share in India's foreign trade in 1931 dropped from 39 per cent. to 34 per cent.

An even more striking picture is presented by the import of cotton goods into India. From this point of view it is interesting to study the table drawn up by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce:—

Year	Total yardage in millions	Total value in million pounds sterling
1928	... 1,542	... 30.4
1929	... 1,374	... 26.1
1930	... 778	... 13.7
1931	... 390	... 5.5

Thus the reduction of the imports is enormous, especially if we remember that in 1913 and 1914 India imported from England about three milliard yards of cotton goods. At the same time the share of Japan has been steadily rising; the same report points out that the yardage of cotton goods imported into India from Japan increased from 90 million yards in 1921-22 to 562 million yards in 1929-30, a rise of 600 per cent.

England's control of the Indian market is contested not only by Japan but also by the United States and a number of other countries. Thus is the field of galvanised iron England is being hard pressed by Belgium. The aggravation of the crisis, the competition of the imperialist countries and the general tendency of the positions of British imperialism to weaken led the British bourgeoisie to the scheme to solve the crisis and consolidate

their positions by strengthening the British Empire, increasing the exploitation of the colonial peoples and of the British working class. This is the road chosen by British imperialism in the attempt to solve the crisis.

The post-war economic development of India, especially during the years 1930-31, reveals that in the field of cotton goods (of the lower and middle grades) the Indian market has been lost to England for good. The British export, which largely consisted of textiles, must now change its character. This altered position British imperialism is attempting to utilise in its negotiations with the Indian bourgeoisie on the question of the conditions to be laid at the basis of an agreement between them. British imperialism—and in this respect the editorial in the magazine, "Capital," of April 7th is highly significant—attempts to frighten the Indian bourgeoisie by the competition of Japanese textiles (which is actually assuming serious proportions), the prospective competition of the U.S.S.R. in the field of wheat, flax, hemp, etc., in the European market, the threat of counter-measures against the Indian bourgeoisie in Britain, her dominions and colonies, and, finally, the importance of its army and navy both for the struggle against the revolution in India and against foreign invasions. "Capital" assures the Indian bourgeoisie that it is in their interests to voluntarily support the British Empire and the system of preferential tariffs, promising to leave them the Indian market for cotton goods of the coarse and middle grades, to assure for the same goods the markets of the other British colonies (in Africa, etc.) which are now threatened by Japanese competition, and to make some other concessions of an economic and "constitutional" character.

British imperialism therefore seeks to introduce a system of preferential tariffs and, with the aid of custom duties and other measures (of an economic and administrative character, such as the gold drain, etc.), preserve the empire market. The same applies to India. Lately a number of preferential tariffs has been introduced in India (on cotton goods, metals, etc.).

The policy of the British imperialists in India consists of consolidating their economic and political power. While fighting the revolutionary mass movement the imperialists, seeking to prevent and defeat the Indian revolution, resort on the one hand to terroristic methods: tens of thousands of workers, peasants and revolutionary youths have been thrown into jails, and punitive expeditions are wreaking havoc all over the country where a state of siege has been proclaimed. Abolishing every semblance of law and order, the imperialists are shooting down thousands of

workers and peasants, making use of every arm including aviation. But on the other hand they are prepared to make some slight economic and political concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie in order to attract them on their side. These concessions (the extent of which is determined by the power of the revolutionary mass movement) in the economic field follow, on the whole, the line of preserving India as an agrarian-raw materials appendage of the mother country, and in the political field, the line of attracting the exploiting classes to a certain measure of participation in the Government while securing the interests and ruling position of British imperialism.

For an estimation of the policy of British imperialism the "Times" editorial of May 3rd is of interest:

"The emergency ordinances, in themselves, settle nothing . . ." says the "Times." "The Imperial Government must give conclusive proof that their word is their bond and that the completion of the work of the Round Table Committees means the practical initiation of constitutional reform . . . the sooner the better, for there is no other permanent solution of the Indian problem."

British imperialism has good reason to worry, for all the facts show that the terror failed to throttle the revolutionary movement which, in the conditions of the growing crisis, is assuming more and more serious dimensions, involving millions of peasants and creating the elements of a revolutionary uprising of the toiling masses. By these concessions British imperialism cannot solve the existing contradictions. On the contrary, they will lead to a further development of the revolutionary struggle by demonstrating once more the counter-revolutionary character of the Indian bourgeoisie.

All the events of the last years of the crisis testify that the contradictions between British imperialism and Indian capital are not becoming mitigated. Even those concessions which the imperialists are making show that British capital is incapable of solving the problems of a national market for the Indian industry. The basic economic contradictions between the interests of the development of the productive forces of India and the interests of British imperialism remain intact. The anti-national character of the Indian bourgeoisie is demonstrated particularly in the fact that by fighting against the Indian revolution it betrays the fundamental interests of the economic and political development of the country.

The Indian bourgeoisie fears a popular revolution and, fighting against it together with the imperialists, is heading towards such an agree-



ment, without, of course, refusing to take advantage of every favourable opportunity in order to wring for some new concessions and increase its share in the exploitation of the masses.

In the field of economic concessions British imperialism has lately introduced protective tariffs for the paper, sugar, artificial silk, and cotton industries and has rendered considerable aid to the Tata Works.

The assistance to the Indian cotton industry was carried out in such a way as to undermine the competition of Japan and safeguard the interests of Lancashire. For apart from introducing protective tariffs the imperialists have also introduced a duty on imported cotton used for the production of high-grade goods, thus weakening the positions of the Indian bourgeoisie in their struggle against Lancashire.

By these concessions (the introduction of protective tariffs) British imperialism seeks to direct Indian capital into agriculture and those industries which are connected with the immediate treatment of agricultural produce and do not strengthen the contradictions with England, attempting at the same time to consolidate its influence also by extensively interweaving and merging with Indian capital, as has been the case in the jute industry.

The struggle did not end there, however. The Indian bourgeoisie demands further concessions, demands a share of the State budget, insists that a part of the military expenditures must be carried by Britain herself, demands the creation of a reserve bank to assist Indian capital, and participation in the regulation of the financial system of the country, the introduction of protective duties, and opposes the separation of the railway budget from the general State budget (by means of which Britain seeks to strengthen and assure its predominance over the railways).

British imperialism in its negotiations with the Indian bourgeoisie is consistently protecting the interests of its feudal allies, meeting in this with the support of the section of the Indian bourgeoisie which is connected with the landlords and the usurers.

In the Governmental field British imperialism is prepared to allow the bourgeoisie greater participation in the administration, to increase the percentage of voters in the elections to the legislative assemblies, to give the latter greater independence in the health department, etc., even to grant them 15-20 per cent. of the State budget to be disposed of in accordance with their own wishes, though preserving, of course, the veto powers of the Viceroy, etc. At the same time they are proposing a federation scheme which, they hope, will consolidate, with the aid of the princes, landlords,

clergy, and the other reactionary groups, the power of the imperialists and of the feudalists by weaning over the Indian bourgeoisie. In its scheme of a feudal-federal colonial India British imperialism seeks to create such a system as would enable it to preserve and consolidate in the safest possible manner its rule over India, by utilising to the utmost the feudal relics and all the different contradictions (of a national, religious character, etc.). British imperialism, while conducting negotiations, is resorting at the same time to every means of pressure and seeking to sharpen the internal contradictions. One of the most effective methods in this field is the fanning and utilisation of the national antagonisms.

The constitution which imperialism seeks to introduce is aimed not only at strengthening the British yoke but at consolidating all the exploiting classes for the struggle against the Indian people, against the Indian revolution.

The constitution prepared by British imperialism closely resembled the draft constitution worked out by the Indian bourgeoisie itself. The draft prepared by the commission of representatives of all parties, presided over by Nehru, and approved by the National Congress, represents a fundamental document of the Indian bourgeoisie of all shades and currents. This document was promulgated by the bourgeoisie in 1929, and to this day it is still essentially fighting for it.

At the same time British imperialism demands from the Indian bourgeoisie loyalty, support of the British Empire and of the system of preferential tariffs, as well as support of British imperialism in its struggle against the Soviet Union. British imperialism seeks to secure the support of the Indian bourgeoisie in its fight against the other imperialist countries which have advanced the demand for a new partition of the world (the United States, etc.) as was the case in 1914-1918.

### III.

#### *The Round Table Conference and the National Congress.*

The second session of the Round Table Conference outwardly ended in a rupture with the National Congress, but in reality no such rupture took place: the negotiations are continuing and the struggle for concessions is still in progress. The fundamental cause of the negotiations failing as yet to result in a formal agreement consists in the immense swing of the revolutionary struggle of the peasant and working masses, which, under the conditions of the unrelenting economic crisis and growing destitution has forced Congress to resort to a "left" manoeuvre to forestall a

national uprising and attempt to secure further concessions from the British imperialists.

Statements by different Congress leaders fully confirm this view. Mr. Gandhi, upon returning to India, sent a telegram to Lord Irwin in which he justifies the Congress decision to proclaim a boycott movement, adding (according to the London "Times") :

"Please believe me. I have done everything I could but have failed. Nevertheless, I am not losing hope, with the help of God, to preserve the relationship established during our negotiations in Delhi. I will not betray your trust."

Yes, the liberal conciliationist Gandhi has fully justified the trust of the British imperialists. His rôle of an aide of British imperialism has again been strikingly confirmed.

"As regards helpers (of the British imperialists) of the type of Gandhi, czarism had a whole flock of them in the person of the liberal conciliationists of all kinds" (Stalin, "Political Report of the C.C. to the XVI. Congress of the C.P.S.U.").

Subhas Bose, one of the "left" leaders of the National Congress, in an interview with the "Bombay Chronicle" of December 25, 1931, confirmed this position of the bourgeois National Congress even more clearly :

"The Government have been carrying on their repressive policy in full swing . . . The only means . . . of weaning away the youth from the path of despair is for the Congress immediately to launch a militant campaign. This is why I have advocated a campaign for the boycott of British goods and of British institutions. If by doing so we rouse sufficient enthusiasm all over the province, we shall be able to reply to the challenge of the bureaucracy and to make effective our hitherto ineffective appeal for non-violence." ("Bombay Chronicle," December 25, 1931.)

The sense of the statement of the leader of the "left" national reformists is entirely clear: unless the initiative in the "action" is taken over by them a spontaneous revolutionary outbreak may occur, and the toiling masses, scorning the treacherous theory of non-violence, will start a national revolutionary uprising against the imperialists, landlords, usurers and other parasites and destroy the existing system of national and social oppression.

The peasant masses are drifting towards the left, millions have come into motion; the number of spontaneous revolts is growing; in Burma and Kashmir partisan warfare is under way; in the United Provinces the peasant masses are begin-

ning to refuse on their own initiative to pay debts and rents; in a number of districts the peasantry is beginning to look askance at the National Congress and are cooling off towards it; all this is driving fear into the hearts of the Indian bourgeoisie. The National Congress fears that the anti-imperialist and agrarian streams of the revolutionary movement will be converging more and more and that in certain districts the elements of a national war are already in evidence.

The young Nehru, the "left" leader of the National Congress, noting this tendency and paying lip-service to the no-rent movement in the United Provinces, declares that it is essential to prevent the no-rent campaign from assuming an anti-imperialist character. The "left" national reformists seek by every means not only to reduce the anti-imperialist struggle to nought, but also to keep the peasant movement within the confines of a peaceful campaign of protest, and of cringing for sops in the form of a slight reduction of taxes, rentals, and debts, without encroaching upon the rights of the landlords and the power of the imperialists. The organ of the Congress, "The Age," greeting Nehru and his policy of keeping the peasant movement within the limits of a purely economic campaign, openly wrote :

"Should the no-rent campaign develop into a political struggle and co-ordinate itself with the anti-imperialist movement the results will be disastrous to the Congress."

Congress is conducting similar work of disorganisation among the working class as well. The powerful development of the labour movement, the growing disappointment of the working masses with the National Congress, force the Indian bourgeoisie to resort to various manoeuvres in order to preserve their influence, isolate the communists, and consolidate their positions in the trade union movement. The revolutionary demonstrations of the toiling masses of Bombay, the battles with the police are described by the "Bombay Chronicle," the Congress organ, as "hooliganism." The Calcutta "Advance" wrote on February 18: "We do not want any labour troubles and strikes on the railways."

The bourgeois National Congress is now seeking to distract the working class from the anti-imperialist struggle and direct it along the path of economy. In this direction the bourgeois agency in the labour movement is conducting vigorous activities, striving to utilise the growing disillusionment of the working masses with the National Congress. As an illustration we will quote a statement by Ruikar, the Chairman of the reformist All-India Trade Union Congress, and member of the National Congress, made at



a meeting of the textile workers Union in Nagpur. We are quoting the "Times of India" of January 15.

"It is understood that at a recent meeting of the Executive of the Nagpur textile Union under the presidentship of Mr. R. S. Ruikar a resolution was carried asking workers not to take part in the Congress movement but to confine their attention to trade union activities . . . In the course of a statement Mr. Ruikar stated . . . that the workers felt that they were let down by the Congress leaders."

The propaganda of economism by the national-reformists facilitates the political agreement between the national reformists (including the Roy-W. N. Joshi-Kandalkar group) and the Joshi-Giri-Bakhala group, erases every semblance of "discord" between the national-reformists, this agency of the Indian bourgeoisie, and the Joshi-Giri group, the agency of British imperialism, in the struggle against the revolutionary proletariat, strikingly exposes the counter-revolutionary character of the Roy group, and testifies that the consolidation of all the counter-revolu-

tionary groupings is making rapid headway. The reaction is gathering all of its forces to crush the revolutionary people. The "left" national reformism covers up its treacherous work by "left" manoeuvres.

Seeing that Gandhism alone will not carry it very far, the bourgeoisie, apart from new "left" manoeuvres designed to strengthen the authority of the National Congress and of its leaders, is seeking to make use of the "left" detachments of national reformism including its most dangerous variety, the Roy group.

The toiling masses are drifting towards the left, while the bourgeoisie, under the cover of "left" manoeuvres, is moving towards the right. The class struggle is sharpening, the differentiation is proceeding at a rapid pace, ever greater sections of the toiling population, under the blows of the crisis and influence of the lessons of the class struggle and emancipation movement, are beginning to adopt the revolutionary methods of struggle, seeking a revolutionary programme and leadership, and breaking the hold counter-revolutionary Gandhism.

## OBSTRUCTIONS AND HINDRANCES TO THE FACTORY WORK IN ENGLAND

By M.M.

THE British Party which, despite a number of decisions and efforts, has made little progress in its work in the factories, has now begun intensive work in this field. At the commencement of January, 1932, the Party decided to concentrate the best forces of the Central Committee and the D.P.C's on the work in 52 selected factories in different branches of industry and districts in London, South Wales, Manchester and Scotland. The experiences of the first months of this special concentration have shown that by means of a correct usage of the Party forces, a systematic control of its activities, and above all, the organisation of the struggles of the workers of each factory on the basis of concrete demands and questions, noteworthy results can be obtained in a comparatively very short time.

By means of this special concentration it was also possible to throw some light on a series of the most important reasons for the weakness of the factory work hitherto. This concrete factory work has in many cases exposed a series of hindrances which constitute, despite all previous acceptances of decisions and resolutions of the Central Committee and the E.C.C.I., in reality

a dangerous misunderstanding of the line of the Party.

In the work in the factories there are a number of difficulties which belong more or less to those of an objective character, and which to some extent, in the present period of development of our movement will not be eliminated; or at least not at once or completely. We have in mind such difficulties as the employers' oppression, dismissals, unemployment, etc. But experience shows that in addition to these kind of difficulties, there exists a series of other obstacles and barriers which can and must be eliminated at once. These hindrances which can be found everywhere in the British Communist Party, although they may seem insignificant and small to some comrades when regarded separately, actually mean in practice a high wall which extraordinarily hinders the development of the factory group work and the work in the factories. These kind of hindrances can jeopardise the entire fulfilment of the correct decisions of the Party on the concentration on the factories if they are not rooted out of the ranks of the Party.

The most difficult thing in overcoming these kinds of hindrances consists in the fact that as a

rule they are not openly and clearly expressed, that they lie deep down and only show themselves in the practical work or, more correctly, in the determined and concrete carrying out of the policy of the factory work, and then often in a very unclear and concealed form.

The most important of these kinds of hindrances are:

*The Party work is chiefly carried on in the evening*; this Social-Democratic conception is still current among the members of the C.P.G.B. The members of the Party who work in a factory often feel themselves to be a Party member only after work, after they have washed and changed. In the factory itself, during working hours, they speak to other workers about sports, horse-racing, etc., but very little about politics or about conditions in the works. Naturally, there are exceptions, but it is a fact, that the Communists still do not carry out the Bolshevik axiom, that the Party work must be based on the activities in the factory during working hours, on the way to the factory and home, and chiefly on the basis of the questions of the factory, and conflicts on working conditions. There is still no connection between the Party work of the local organisation, between the street group and the work which is carried on, or should be, in the factories. The comrades who work in the locality where they live after working hours, must nevertheless link up with the questions in the factories, and continue the work which has been commenced in the factories through cells or individual comrades.

*Ignorance of the situation in the factory, even in the case of comrades who work in factories themselves.* At a meeting of London active comrades the secretary of a factory group declared in discussion that he was in agreement with the resolution of the C.C. but that in his factory there are no grievances, no difficulties, no daily conflicts. The comrade from a factory group in North-West London declared in a meeting of the L.P.C. that in his factory the workers have no grievances and that therefore he did not know how the factory group could raise such questions. In the same speech he declared, however, that every worker arriving five or ten minutes late had one hour's pay deducted, without realising that this is also a question in which the factory group can bring the entire staff behind itself for action. Another comrade did not understand that we can take also such questions for the starting point of mobilising the masses as, for example, the fact that the bus does not stop at the factory gate but 50 to 100 yards further up the road, or that no extra buses are put on when the buzzer blows, so that our workers have to wait sometimes 15 to 30 minutes before they can

go home. A member of the D.P.C. in Birmingham said in a discussion on the situation in a certain factory "that the organisation in this factory had gone out of existence because there were no grievances." There are no workers in capitalist society who do not have some kind of grievance either in regard to their working conditions, wages, the foreman, chief engineer or the employer. It is precisely the task of our groups and comrades to acquaint themselves with the concrete reasons and forms of all kinds of discontent, to explain to the workers, and discuss with them the way of eliminating these reasons. Only by the most careful explanation and utilisation of the forms of the struggle for the satisfaction of separate grievances can this dissatisfaction be developed to resist them and our comrades win the confidence of the workers.

We give all these examples to show how often we completely lose sight of the most elementary things in our factory work. Such comrades often give a comparatively good answer to questions about the line of the Party, the latest decisions and documents or questions of international policy, but when one asks them about such small questions one immediately perceives that even our comrades themselves working in factories often know very little about the organisation of the workers, opponent organisations, the existing or possible factory institutions (shop stewards, etc.), about the employer, or his profits.

In close connection with these facts is the *under-estimation of the radicalisation of the workers and their readiness to struggle.* When it is a matter of formulæ and points in the resolutions, all comrades vote unanimously that the workers are becoming radicalised, that they are ready to fight and so on, but when it is necessary to undertake the actual preparation of the struggle, drawing the necessary conclusions from this correct estimation, it is very often the case that our comrades do not know the feelings of the workers in a definite concrete situation and consequently tend to under-estimate their readiness to struggle. This opportunist expression is to be found in all the great struggles of last year, for example, the strike of the miners in South Wales in January, 1931, the woollen workers in Bradford and Shipley, July, 1931, the first, and especially the second, miners' strike in Scotland, July and August, 1931, the strike of the miners in Cumberland, the lightermen's strike in London, etc. The strike of the hauliers in a pit in South Wales (February, 1932) was a surprise to our comrades. Even in the most recent period, after the resolution of the C.C. and its discussion in the lower organisations, such tendencies are not completely overcome. The District



Secretary in Manchester wrote the following in a report on the ballot of the Lancashire weavers in March, 1932. "The result of the ballot was 9 to 1 for the strike. It was clear that the weavers are against the more loom system. One or two comrades from North Lancashire (where there are chiefly weavers) have so under-estimated the radicalisation of the masses that they thought it would be possible that the reformists would nevertheless 'cook up' a majority in the ballot, against the strike."

*All kinds of "let them starve" theories are deeply-rooted in the Party.* When after the last parliamentary election the increase in our Party's vote was found to be much below all estimates, there was a dangerous tendency in many Party organisations to make the workers responsible for everything; which was fairly popular. "Let the workers starve," and then they will realise that they must support the Communists. This theory, which has nothing in common with Bolshevism, is an expression of the non-Bolshevist conception of the rôle of the Party and leads to the justification of every kind of mistake, the concealment of all shortcomings; to a throttling of self-criticism, and is a great hindrance in the development of Bolshevik mass work in the factories and during strikes, etc. During the last seamen's strike, which was a failure, there were comrades among our sailors who declared that the employers have not cut wages sufficiently that one must let the workers starve and then they will strike and fight.

In the report from Manchester it is said that the theory of "let them starve" is prevalent among many members in the most varied form. "In Salford, Burnley and in the N.U.W.M., our comrades call those workers who will not buy the 'Daily Worker' under the eye of the employer, cowards, and curse those workers who stand on the pavement during demonstrations." Another variation of the opportunist "let them starve" theory is the attempt to place the responsibility for an unsuccessful action or passivity in the Party chiefly on the shoulders of the workers. Instead of trying to find out after every action, our own weaknesses, errors and shortcomings, there are cases when our comrades endeavour to place all the responsibility on the workers; "their attitude," etc.

In Birmingham a comrade stated at a meeting of the active comrades that the workers are "absolutely apathetic" in a factory where a few weeks previously we had successfully carried out a splendid action against the Bedaux system. The District Secretary of Birmingham declared that after the workers had won such an easy victory they had apparently returned to the old situation of disorganisation. An active comrade

of the D.P.C. said, in regard to these workers, that she had noted an over-estimation of the desire of the workers to create a factory committee. Thousands of expressions of such extraordinarily harmful conceptions can be encountered in every organisation. How foreign such expressions and theories are to Communists and where they lead is shown by the fact that Fenner Brockway, the chairman of the Independent Labour Party, devoted a great deal of time in his chairman's address at the last conference of the I.L.P. to "the apathy and hopelessness" of the workers.

*The Party leading committees are not connected with the factories.* This point appears to us especially important, because the division between the Party and the feelings of the workers in the factories is extremely alarming. As we have said, there are Party cells in 40-50 factories; there are Party members in hundreds of factories, but there are very few cases where these cells and members inform the Party leading committees on the humour, the tendencies and conceptions of the workers. The Party, from the Central Committee downwards, determines its tasks and policy on the basis of international decisions and on the general situation, which one chiefly acquaints oneself with (when not exclusively) through the medium of the bourgeois and reformist press. Information of our own does not exist. The connection between the cells and members who are in factories, on the one hand, and the Party as a whole, on the other, is only organisational and administrative. The task of the cells does not simply consist in carrying out the line and tasks of the Party in the factory, but also in supplying the Party with a wealth of material for defining its line and tasks. The fulfilment of this function by the factory cells and those Party members who work in factories is an important pre-condition for fixing the correct line and tasks of the Party, as well as for the rapid reaction of the Party to all events happening in the factories.

*No inclusion of the forces from the factories in the active work.* This hindrance also is not to be regarded as a generality. There are factories and branches of industry where we have individual comrades who have in their locality a great personal influence. For example, a number of the organisers of the revolutionary miners' union in Scotland. These comrades are very well known in the villages and at the pits, and if the workers have any complaint they go to these people personally, requesting advice and support, etc. Usually the following takes place: such comrades immediately intervene, go to the Exchange, the employer, or the Council offices, and, in the majority of cases, they are very successful. It is for this reason that workers come

to them who have nothing to do with our movement. It is very often the case, that, for instance, in Scotland the employers refuse to negotiate with these people when they appear in their capacity as officials of the U.M.S. But when they declare that they have come as a representative of the worker in person and not as an official representative of our organisation, the employers deal with the case. The work of such comrades is very valuable for the Party, and there can be no doubt that the situation of our movement in England would be much more satisfactory if we had such comrades in every large factory and working class quarter. But, on the other hand, it must be said, that in the majority of cases, these comrades have not so far understood how to educate the workers sufficiently for struggle, or how to utilise every complaint for bringing the worker concerned into the organisation, awakening their activity and developing it.

*Failure to concentrate on one's own factory.* There are cases, especially in Scotland, where good, active comrades are employed at the pits as checkweighmen and men's deputies, but they are used too much for the general agitation and organisation work in other districts, and neglect the work in their own pit. They are good organisers; speakers; they address meetings everywhere, on how one should work, but they are so occupied with this job that they do practically nothing in their own works. In London a certain comrade worked in a factory who was very active in the local organisation. For a period he was even the secretary of the largest local organisation numerically in London, but in the factory he did practically nothing and the factory cell has practically collapsed. When the decision was made that his chief duty is his work in the factory cell, the cell obtained quite good results in a few weeks.

*There is no special attention to members from the factory.* This reflects the failure to steer a course to the factories. All members are important for us, and all have the same rights, but those members whom we must win from the factories, especially to-day when 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. of the Party members are unemployed, must be paid special attention. One must educate them, give them Party work, attract them to responsible Party tasks, also when they will be "weaker" at the start than some comrades with more experience, their development must be closely supervised and a situation of responsibility for the loss of each member from the factory created. One can only expect the course to the factories to be seriously carried out in reality when such an "atmosphere" is created inside the Party on this question. This is connected also with the question of the super-

vision of all members and the rapid utilisation of registration forms and questionnaires. It is often the case that factory workers enter the local organisation, who live in quite a different district, and if a factory cell exists in their factory, often months pass before this is discovered and the worker concerned attached to the cell.

*An incorrect way of overcoming various prejudices.* Very often workers who are already on the way towards us will not, at the commencement, openly and directly link up with us. It is often the case that our approach to such workers is too rough, tactless and harsh. Instead of a careful and painstaking explanation, we often put forward exaggerated demands, which will not attach such people to our movement. For example during the last weavers' strike in a town in Lancashire we were in contact with an active striker who was also an influential trade union man. He did not desire to meet our comrades in the street or at their houses because immediately he was seen he would be stamped as a Communist. For this reason he proposed that our comrades visit him in the evening, at his house. Our comrades sent a woman comrade to him and he was very dissatisfied because he had to remain in the passage with her, as his wife was not at home, and he dare not allow her into the house. Such prejudices are the influence of the bourgeoisie and their "morals" and ethics, but we must take this into consideration, and overcome such prejudices with the greatest forethought.

*Bad internal situation in the local organisation.* is a significant hindrance to the local factory work. In many local organisations there are small personal and group struggles, mutual accusations, suspicions, etc. There is an element among the older members which is often pessimistic, and does not believe that the decisions can be carried out, who adopt a supercilious attitude. "have seen everything," who make impermissible jokes and ironical remarks about the Party, who, in a word, often create an atmosphere which for work in the factories, or in general, is absolutely impossible. This cannot be generalised. On the whole, the old members belong to the most tested fighters of the C.P., but there are elements among them who have become pessimistic through the isolation of certain organisations year after year from the masses. The question must be placed before such members with the greatest sharpness, that they alter themselves, befit themselves to carry out the line of the Party also in practice, and utilise their experience in a correct manner to assist the development of the factory work.

*Under-estimation and neglect of the work in*



*reformist trade unions* belongs to the most important hindrances to the work in the factories. We are in a position to supply a few pages of quite concrete examples of how under-estimation and neglect of the work in reformist trade unions had led to the weakening of our positions in the factory. A crass example is Burnley, where our comrades lost two months before the trade union conference and did nothing in the branches. When actually this work was commenced it was then discovered that the comrade whom we had nominated for a trade union position had paid no contributions for a long time and therefore was disqualified. In South Wales an old fighter, Comrade Jack Davies, was not re-elected as chairman of his branch because we did not develop sufficient mass activity in the elections of the trade union branch officials. In Glasgow in a factory there were two members of a factory cell (including the secretary) who only failed to be elected as members of the district committee of their union because they only attended two or three times during the previous year. When this failure was discussed in the cell, the comrades declared that they were occupied with other Party work. A series of similar examples could be cited.

The very low percentage of Party members organised in the trade unions must be called attention to in this connection. The percentage is not only very low but has even decreased, in comparison with the situation three or four years ago. Unfortunately we have not precise figures for the entire Party, but partial figures give the actual situation fairly correctly. In London, for example, of the Party members employed in separate branches of industry the following are organised in trade unions: metal workers 60 per cent., building workers 50 per cent., printers 33 per cent., clothing 80 per cent., railway workers 88 per cent.; only the electricians are organised 100 per cent. in the trade union. The active work in the trade union is much worse. During the recent sessions of the D.P.C.'s in Manchester, Scotland and London, when the resolution of the C.C. of January was discussed, a show of hands was taken of those who were carrying on active trade union work. Of the 30-40 leading comrades from these districts only a few answered this question in the affirmative. These facts merely reflect the division which exists in the English Party between the trade union and the factory work. Even to the extent that any trade union work is done, his work is not organically connected with the activity in the factory. The January resolution of the Plenary session of the Central Committee of the C.P.G.B. points out the great importance of this mutual connection correctly. The creation of this connection is

therefore an important political task of each Party organisation and a condition of existence for successful trade union work as well as the work in the factories.

*The conception of all lower trade union officials as a complete reactionary mass* is paramount in the C.P.G.B. All elected officials of the reformist trade unions are regarded as a rule, by our comrades, as traitors and Social-Fascists, even when they continue to work in the factory. In this case also there are many concrete examples.

*A complete misunderstanding and partly-open opposition against those portions of the C.C. resolution which speak about winning the lower trade union branches and the attraction of the workers to the trade unions for the purpose of strengthening the struggle against reformist leaders.* This misconception is a clear expression of the anti-trade union work tendencies which are strong in the Party. These conceptions were in the forefront in connection with the discussion on the Birmingham factory. In the "Daily Worker" of the 14th April, for example, a resolution of the Party organisation at Balham was published which expressed this incorrect attitude very clearly. The chief arguments in this resolution are the following:

"The whole line of the Party at the Leeds Congress, and since, has been to maintain that job organisation can alone be the unit of an 'organ of class struggle.'

"That the very structure, limited scope, organisation, constitution and leadership of the unions make them unsuitable as organs of class struggle.

"That their capture is unlikely because of the bureaucracy, and that our principal work lies in building up the workers' weapons of struggle inside the pits, factories and workshops."

The conceptions formulated in this resolution do not express the line of the Party and the C.I.

Above all, the January resolution of the C.C. does not speak about the capture of the trade unions, but *the lower trade union branches* (transformation of the trade union branches from organs of class collaboration into organs of the class struggle). The Balham resolution speaks continuously of the transformation of the trade unions. It is politically impermissible to mix these two things and the polemics against alleged, invented statements in the C.C. resolution on "the capture of the trade unions" are especially so. This resolution of the C.C. states expressly its opposition to all left reformist tendencies which assume that it is possible to capture the trade unions together with their apparatus. This charge in the resolution of the Balham organisation is either an expression of political lack of

understanding of the difference between the trade unions (with their apparatus), and the lower trade union branches, or an attempt to conceal incorrect anti-trade union policy, by general talk about trade union apparatus. The resolution of the C.C. places the task of the struggle for winning the *workers*, the *members* of the trade unions before the Party, and speaks of the possibility and necessity of winning the lower trade union organisations in this connection.

Apart from this the Balham resolution opposes two inseparable parts of our work for taking the working masses out of the influence of the reformists, to each other. The harmful philosophy that we should not work in the trade unions because the best form of class struggle is the factory organisation must be completely routed out of the ranks of the Party. Naturally the factory form which embraces both organised and unorganised workers, is the best form, but a significant part of the workers *who are in the factories* are organised in the trade unions. Precisely in order to organise them on a factory basis we must work in the trade unions, and endeavour to transform the lower trade union units, from organs of class collaboration, into organs of class struggle. One does not contradict the other. The Communist work in the trade unions can only strengthen our position in the factories.

*Concoction of new trade unions and forms of organisation to shirk the difficulties of the daily work in the factories.* A comrade from Coventry stated in the meeting of active comrades in Birmingham, already quoted, "the workers demand an all-embracing trade union." "The reason for the failure of the M.M. in Coventry consists in the fact that the M.M. was too small." Such tendencies can be found everywhere. Among our seamen a whole theory has been constructed, that the M.M. itself cannot be a mass organisation, but only a combination of the best

elements for the preparation of a mass trade union. The M.M. (revolutionary trade union opposition) if it is to be built on the basis of the last decisions of the R.I.L.U. can, and must become a wide mass organisation.

*Commanding and general talk about the leading rôle of the Party is also a hindrance in the trade union work.* Our comrades often come to the workers and declare: *we are the leaders*, the C.P. is the only leader of the workers, etc., and wonder very much when the workers, who have not seen the Communists before the strike, don't grasp this. Our comrades forget very often that their task not only consists in leading the workers, but also in *learning very much from the mass of the workers themselves*. This task must be especially emphasised for such a Party as the British Party, precisely because the Party is insufficiently connected with the masses. There is a further series of such tendencies and hindrances which, in their totality impede the realisation of the course to the factories in practice. In addition to those already enumerated we add the following: opportunist failures in strike struggles, exaggerated demands of the offensive at an incorrect time, under-estimation of the organisation work, failure to carry out decisions and insufficient control over the execution of decisions.

All these tendencies and features can only be overcome through a concrete posing of the question (who, how, when and where) through explanation, conviction and concrete help and instruction. This struggle must be carried out concretely, each individual example must be brought immediately into the light of day and explained. This political struggle against such hindrances to the factory work belongs to the most important conditions for the carrying out of the correct decisions taken by the Party in January, 1932.

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## M. N. POKROVSKY (1868-1932).

**W**ITH the death of Michael Nikolaevich Pokrovsky, the international revolutionary movement has lost one of the most outstanding representatives of the Bolshevik old guard, an active participant in the revolution of 1905 and the proletarian revolution of 1917, an uncompromising fighter for the Bolshevik line of the C.P.S.U. and the Communist International, a Communist scientist of world renown, an organiser and guide in the theoretical work and propagandist of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

M. N. Pokrovsky was one of the most brilliant men of the Bolshevik movement. He was the living embodiment of the unity between revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice.

From the underground activities under tsarism to the October victory, to the establishment and entrenchment of the proletarian dictatorship. Through the battles of the civil war period and the difficulties of the first steps in economic construction to the completion of the foundations of socialist economy. From the first small propaganda groups among the workers of Russia and the first attempts to unite the revolutionary elements of the international proletariat against opportunism and its Trotskyist variety on the basis of Bolshevik policies, to the organisation and strengthening of the Communist International and the transformation of the U.S.S.R. into an unconquerable fortress and base of the world revolution. Such is the victorious development of the Bolshevik Party, which would have been impossible without the utmost attention on the part of the whole party to Bolshevik theory, to the unity of revolutionary theory and practice and uncompromising struggle against all deviations from Marxism-Leninism.

M. N. Pokrovsky covered a considerable part of this road in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, under the guidance of Lenin. M. N. Pokrovsky did commit political and theoretical mistakes in his Party and scientific activities. During the period of reaction, when he was an emigré, he moved away from the Bolsheviks, and joined the "Vpered"\* group; but already in 1911 he broke with this group and returned to the Leninist positions. During the period of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty he was

aligned for a while with the group of "Left" Communists. But in all the decisive periods in the history of the Bolshevik Party, in all the decisive historical events, he was in the foremost ranks of the revolutionary struggle. In 1905 he was among the organisers of the insurrection in Moscow; during the world war he was in the ranks of the consistent internationalists, in the days of the October revolution he was on the staff which directed the proletarian insurrection in one of the districts of Moscow. After he had corrected his "Left" Communist errors of 1918, he uninterruptedly waged a consistent struggle for Marxism-Leninism, for the general line of the Party and against all deviations from this line.

Pokrovsky was one of the greatest fighters for the Marxian-Leninist theory, an outstanding Communist scientist as well as populariser of Marxian theory. Comrade Pokrovsky's principal theoretical work lay in the field of Russian history. In 1910, when he lived abroad, Pokrovsky wrote his "Russian History from Its Earliest Period," the first and classical work on Russian history which even at present cannot be replaced by any other work. This work became the guide for the Marxian study of Russia's past and for an understanding of all the conditions under which the proletariat of Russia has developed, has waged the struggle for power and for socialism. Pokrovsky considered his scientific work in the nature of Party and political work, subjecting it fully to the needs and requirements of the Party. He wrote his works in the style of a fighter against the bourgeoisie, and he attacked the Mensheviks and opportunists with great political vehemence and sharp sarcasm. He considered science as a weapon to prepare the proletariat for the struggle for socialism.

The historical works of Pokrovsky contain errors and incorrect generalisations. But no one understood better than he the necessity of re-examining and revising these questions. "There is not a single question in Russian history, starting with its earliest periods, which we would not at present approach in a new way," he writes in the preface to the fourth edition of the "Russian History from Its Earliest Period." However, there is no other work on Russian history which is more Marxian than this one, unsatisfactory as it may be from the standpoint

\* Forward.



of a Marxian of to-day. In one of his latest articles, he wrote: "The conception of Russian history which I characterised as Marxian in the foregoing, in its essence of course did not differ from the Leninist conception. . . . But it is perfectly clear that in certain formulations, at times of considerable importance, the old exposition of this conception differed very much from the Leninist, and at times was simply theoretically illiterate." He adds: "For a long time I have been at work with a 'vacuum cleaner,' and I firmly hope that fewer and fewer of these uncleaned spots will be left."

As a result of this merciless self-criticism, Pokrovsky succeeded in consistently overcoming his theoretical errors and in continually progressing as a Communist scientist and Party man in his scientific creative labours. He fully appreciated the limitations of the sources which he utilised as a historian in 1910. He energetically set to work to utilise the archives which were made accessible by the October Revolution, for the purpose of reevaluating the significance of the facts which had been known before, and supplementing them with new facts which throw a new light on the course of development and provide the possibility of creating a really scientific history. He worked on the archives of the tsarist gendarmerie, to present to the masses in a new light the revolutionary movement in tsarist Russia. He gives a new Marxian interpretation to the peasant wars in Russia, which had been distorted by the bourgeois historians. He organised research studies of the history of the Russian proletariat, which, as he said, "is now becoming one of the most remarkable pages of world history."

"The objective logic of the old 'economic materialism' is against us," Pokrovsky said, "but we are moving forward, and this progress is so incontestable that every serious bourgeois newspaper acknowledges our advance as an objective fact which cannot be ignored. . . . Now, the question as to how a working-class of this variety developed, why it is not only consistently revolutionary—the latter perhaps can be explained by the 'objective factor,'—what is the source of its inexhaustible creative power, cannot be evaded."

"Almost all of them (the Menshevik historians.—Editor) are unable to connect the history of the working-class with the history of the Party of the working-class, almost all of

them start with the incorrect conception of a spontaneous movement of the proletarian masses, and owing to this almost all of them are unable to rise above the history of the economic struggles in the narrow sense of this term. Almost all of them depict our worker as a kind of poor relation of the British trade unionist and German social-democrat. But the whole essence lies in the fact that history had side-tracked the British and German worker for many years far away from revolutionary struggle, while our proletariat was becoming the more revolutionary in proportion as it was becoming more class-conscious. So much so that in Russia the terms 'class-conscious' worker' and 'revolutionist' finally became synonymous. The history of the proletariat as a fighting class should be written entirely anew."

And this work of writing the history of the proletariat was organised by Pokrovsky. With equal energy he undertook the task of organising the work on the history of the civil war, this most heroic chapter in the history of the Russian proletariat.

In connection with the approaching new cycle of imperialist wars and intervention against the U.S.S.R., Pokrovsky undertook the study of international relations in the period of the imperialist war on the basis of the diplomatic documents which have been made public and which disclose the "secret of how war arises." The two volumes which have appeared: "International Relations in Documents" are indispensable to-day. Pokrovsky understood perfectly well the international significance and international effect of the Russian revolution of 1905, and in his article "The Revolution of 1905 and the International Bourgeoisie," he demonstrated in brilliant fashion how the international bourgeoisie is organising to combat the influence the Russian revolution exercises upon the proletariat of the West.

"Every great revolution not only affects the country in which it is occurring, its influence extends to a number of other countries. Since the revolution had not yet occurred in the latter, since the ruling classes in these countries consider the revolution as an approaching, threatening calamity, these ruling classes endeavour to prevent the calamity, try to extinguish the conflagration in the house of the neighbour before their



own roof catches fire. Every great revolution therefore engenders *intervention*."

He analysed the first intervention of French imperialism against the Russian revolution in 1906, when it furnished a loan to the Tsarist Government for the struggle against the revolutionary movement.

While carrying on this enormous research work, Pokrovsky at the same time fought against all opportunist anti-Marxian views. In 1923-24 he took issue with Trotsky, proving that the latter, in his defence of the view that Russian absolutism stood above classes, was completely dominated by bourgeois historiography, that Trotsky's defence of his historical views amounted to a defence of anti-Party, anti-Bolshevist, Trotskyist conceptions, that it was an expression of his struggle against the Bolsheviks, against the October Revolution. Pokrovsky also fought against the defeatist policies of the "Right" opportunists, exposing their Menshevist, capitulatory character.

Thus Pokrovsky in his work in the field of Marxian theory was guided by one principle: *to place theory, particularly historical science at the service of the Party and the revolutionary proletariat, fighting for the unity of revolutionary theory and practice, for Leninism and historical science*. "History," he said, "is politics operating with the past."

Pokrovsky continually strove to imbue history with Leninist dialectics. He said: "Marxism minus dialectics means Marxism minus revolution." Holding aloft the banner of Marxist-Leninist theory, Pokrovsky at the same time always bore in mind the mass reader. He warned the young Bolshevik historians: "Beware of people who speak in incompre-

hensible terms. They use incomprehensible language not for the purpose of demonstrating their knowledge, but to conceal the non-Leninist essence of their ideas."

Pokrovsky was an outstanding figure of the Bolshevik Party in the field of cultural development. A considerable share of the work of organising the People's Commissariat of Education must be credited to him. As Assistant Commissar he was the indispensable adviser and guide on questions of science and of Marxism in general (Lenin). He was responsible for the organisation of workers' colleges, of the Institute of Red Professors, of the Communist Academy. His was the largest share in the creation of new theoretical cadres of the Bolshevik Party.

The work and literary heritage of Pokrovsky are of the greatest importance *for the whole international proletariat*. His basic works should be entered on the list of the most valued possessions of the world revolutionary proletariat. They should be translated, as was already suggested by Lenin, into the European languages. The theoretician and fighter Pokrovsky, must serve as the model to the younger generation of how to combine revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice, how to be at the same time a scientist and a fighter on the barricades, how to engage simultaneously in research work and in the task of organising the proletarian state. They must learn from him how a Marxian approach to any theoretical question, even the most abstract, can be directed against the existing bourgeois system for the purpose of its destruction, how the most profound theoretical truths and new theoretical discoveries can be made popular and comprehensible to the widest toiling masses.

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